ANGLO-SAXON ROYAL GENEALOGIES

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AMONG the Germanic peoples, the Anglo-Saxons alone have handed down a number of royal genealogies, recorded as early as the eighth and ninth centuries. For a period when evidence is scanty they offer materials to historians and ethnologists, as well as to investigators of mythology and legend: at the very beginning of *Beowulf*, the student is faced with a genealogical problem. So it is not surprising that they have been examined by a succession of scholars eminent in Germanic studies:[1] Jakob Grimm, Kemble, Müllenhoff, Plummer, W. H. Stevenson, Olrik, Chadwick, R. W. Chambers. The inclusion of several Anglo-Saxon genealogies in the *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius has attracted the attention of another distinguished group:[2] Zimmer, Mommsen, Duchesne, Thurneysen, F. Lot. There are besides a number of special studies,[3] and many incidental references by workers in related subjects.

Yet anybody who wishes to form a general idea of the nature and value of these genealogies will not find the way easy. If the incidental references to them are assembled, they leave an

[1] J. Grimm *Deutsche Mythologie*, 1835, Appendix. J. M. Kemble *Über die Stammtafel der Westsachsen*, 1836; and Postscript to the Preface of his second edition of *Beowulf* ii (1837), pp. 1 ff. K. Müllenhoff *Beowulf*, 1889. C. Plummer *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, 1892, esp. ii, pp. 1 ff. W. H. Stevenson *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, 1904, esp. pp. 152 ff. A. Olrik *Danmarks Heltedigtning*, 1903–10, with the revised and modified translation by L. M. Hollander *The Heroic Legends of Denmark*, New York 1919, esp. ch. viii. H. M. Chadwick *The Origin of the English Nation*, 1907. R. W. Chambers *Beowulf, an Introduction*, 2nd edn. 1932, esp. pp. 195 ff.

[2] H. Zimmer *Nennius Vindicatus*, 1893. Th. Mommsen *Historia Brittonum* in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Auct. Ant.* xiii (1894). L. Duchesne *Revue Celtique* xv (1894), pp. 174 ff. R. Thurneysen, esp. his review of Zimmer in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* xxviii (1895), pp. 80 ff. F. Lot *Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum*, 1934.

[3] e.g. R. Henning 'Sceaf und die westsächsische Stammtafel', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* xli (1897), pp. 156 ff. G. H. Wheeler 'The Genealogy of the Early West Saxon Kings', *English Historical Review* xxxvi (1921), pp. 161 ff. Erna Hackenberg *Die Stammtafeln der angelsächsischen Königreiche*, Berlin 1918, (factual and valuable). A Brandl 'Die Urstammtafel der Westsachsen und das *Beowulf-Epos*', *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen*, &c., cxxxvii (1918), pp. 6 ff.

impression of incoherence which the longer studies do not altogether remove; and the documents themselves are baffling. Bare lists of names are intractable material, because they afford few sure holds from which criticism can work. It happens too that some of the genealogies appear in literary texts whose composition and authority is the subject of controversy: the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Historia Brittonum*, Asser's *Life of Alfred*. One soon becomes involved in a tangle of possibilities, where the temptation to be over-ingenious is always present, with the doubt whether time is well spent on these old names of kings or shadows.

Still I have persisted in a fresh attempt, working from the documents and using the critical literature as a subsequent check. When dealing with composite sources like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, I have tried not to base arguments on disputed theories of their origin and date; for it seemed best to segregate the genealogies, see what light they throw on the development of the literary texts into which they have been absorbed, and submit to correction by the results of other independent lines of investigation.

I

The Early Documents

(i) Bede, who finished his *History* in 731, gives the genealogy of Hengest and Horsa (*Hist. Eccl.* i. 15); of Hengest's descendants, the kings of Kent: *Aedilberct–Irminric–Octa–Oeric* or *Oisc–Hengist* (ii. 5); and Eorpwald's descent through Redwald and Tytil from Wuffa, the king of the East Angles who gave his name to the Wuffings (ii. 15). As alliteration is a feature of many Anglo-Saxon genealogies, and is sometimes used to test their authenticity, it is worth noting that the last has no alliteration. The second has vowel alliteration up to Hengist, and shows a use of alternative names *Oisc*: *Oeric* likely to confuse later records. The first also isolates the names of Hengist and Horsa in the alliteration: 'Hengist et Horsa . . . erant filii Uictgilsi, cuius pater Uitta, cuius pater Uecta, cuius pater Uoden, de cuius stirpe multarum provinciarum regium genus originem duxit.'

(ii) The Vespasian Group. An early collection of chronological materials, including lists of popes and English bishops, and royal genealogies, is found in three pre-Conquest manuscripts: Vespasian B vi, CCCC 183, and Tiberius B v. The twelfth-century copy in *Textus Roffensis* is closely related to the Tiberius text.

Vespasian B vi, ff. 104–9 is a Mercian fragment, probably from Lichfield,[1] where it remained throughout Anglo-Saxon times. From the episcopal lists it can be dated fairly closely about the year 812. It contains tabular genealogies of the kings of Northumbria (Deira and Bernicia), Mercia, Lindsey, Kent, and East Anglia, in that order, all going back to Woden and Frealaf, and the Lindsey list still farther back to Geat. These have been printed in Sweet's *Oldest English Texts* pp. 167 ff. under the heading 'Genealogies (Northumbrian?)', which has led to the mistaken belief that it is a Northumbrian document. It is a Mercian compilation, reflecting Mercian political interests, and only the Mercian kings are brought up to date with Cenwulf (796–821), who was reigning when the manuscript was written. The royal lists begin and end: 'Haec sunt genelogiae per partes Brittaniae regum regnantium per diuersa loca.'

CCCC 183 contains similar lists, and regnal tables for Northumbria and Mercia, together with Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert in prose and verse. The lists of bishops for Canterbury (but not Rochester), and for Winchester, Sherborne, Wells, and Crediton, are brought up to around 937, so that it is fairly certainly a South-Western manuscript written about that date. Script and small initials are reminiscent of MS. Junius 27, a psalter with Winchester connexions, but the contemporary bishops of Winchester are inaccurately recorded. At the beginning is the picture of a king offering a book to a saint, which Plummer first connected with the statement in Simeon of Durham[2] that Athelstan gave the Life of Cuthbert in verse and prose to the shrine of St. Cuthbert, then at Chester le-Street. This attribution is confirmed by additions relating to the cult of the saint, a short inventory of church vessels in early eleventh-century Northumbrian, and the record of a gift by Walchear bishop of Durham (1071–80). Apparently the manuscript was prepared for the occasion. After the royal genealogies contained in Vespasian B vi, it gives

[1] K. Sisam *Cynewulf* (Brit. Acad. 1933), p. 6. For a description of the MS. see *Catalogue of Ancient MSS. in the British Museum, Part II Latin*, 1884, pp. 79 ff.; and A. Wilmart *Revue Bénédictine*, 1934, pp. 47 ff.

[2] Rolls Series i, p. 211; see Plummer *Baedae Opera Historica* i, p. cxlvii n.; and for more detail, J. A. Robinson *The Times of St. Dunstan*, pp. 51 ff. M. R. James gives a full description in his *Catalogue of the MSS. of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, i, pp. 426 ff. where the genealogies are printed.

the pedigree of Ine of Wessex, which it is convenient to divide into two parts: (i) Ine–Cenred–Ceolwald–Cuþwulf–Cuþwine–Celin–Cynric–Creoda–Cerdic; and (ii) (Cerdic)–Aluca–Giwis–Brand–Bældæg–Woden–Frealaf.

Tiberius B v is, at least in this part, a Christ Church, Canterbury, compilation of the time of Archbishop Sigeric (990–4),[1] whose Itinerary from Rome immediately follows the genealogies. It contains lists similar to those in CCCC 183, but adds before the genealogies a regnal table, without genealogical indications, of West Saxon kings from Cerdic to Æthelred; after the genealogies and the pedigree of Ine, it has a list of West Saxon kings beginning 'Eadweard and Eadmund and Æðelred æðelingas syndon Eadgares suna cyninges' and ending with the long West Saxon pedigree going back to Adam which will be discussed later.[2]

The relation of these three manuscripts is clear: Tiberius B v is not copied from CCCC 183,[3] and both derive from a copy (CT) very closely related to Vespasian B vi, but differing from it in some details like the bad spelling *Ceonreowing* (Vesp. *Cynreowing*) in Cenwulf's pedigree; the displacement of Æthelbald's line among the Mercian genealogies (which in CCCC 183 seems to be only a matter of columnar arrangement); and the inclusion of Ine's pedigree. The genealogies contain no clear evidence that this lost copy was independent of Vespasian B vi.[4]

[1] On Sigeric's dates see K. Sisam *Review of English Studies* vii (1931), pp. 15 f.

[2] These lists are printed by T. Wright *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* ii (1843), pp. 169 ff. On the list beginning 'Eadweard etc.', which is found also in *Textus Roffensis* ed. Hearne, 1720, pp. 61 f., see W. H. Stevenson's *Asser*, p. 158 and note. It goes with Chronicles B, C, D against the Parker MS., Asser, and Æthelweard. The statement that Ine 'getimbrade þæt beorhte mynster æt Glæstingabyrig' suggests that it was prepared or retouched at Glastonbury. This would fit well with its appearance in MS. Tiberius B v, if that MS. was put together at Christ Church soon after Dunstan's death: it contains a list of the abbots of Glastonbury entered in the margin of f. 23*b* as a supplement to the episcopal and genealogical tables. The series of West Saxon kings in this document from Edgar's reign includes Creoda as the son of Cerdic (see below, p. 338). It was often copied in Scandinavian texts, e.g. in the Prologue to the *Prose Edda*; and from a sentence in it: 'se Scef wæs Noes sunu and he wæs innan þære Earce geboren', they produced the name *Sescef*, as Sievers noted (Paul and Braune's *Beiträge* xvi (1892), pp. 361 ff.). Evidently they knew no tradition of Sceaf. The Scandinavian copies agree with Tiberius B v against *Textus Roffensis* in omitting Tætwa and Hwala among Woden's ancestors.

[3] It has not the confusion in the Bernician branches noted below, p. 325.

[4] In the East Anglian list, Sweet prints the strange form *T(y)tucianing* (as if written with *uyn*), where CT has *Tytman*, which is probably right (Florence of Worcester *Tytmon*, miswritten *Titimon* in the late MSS. of Nennius). This would be decisive against derivation of CT from Vespasian B vi, but the MS. is rubbed here, and I am not satisfied that Sweet's reading is correct. The bishops' lists in CCCC 183 contain some evidence, e.g. the older form *Oiðil-wald* (Vespasian *Oeðil-*), that they are not derived from Vespasian B vi in the direct line.

That Ine's pedigree was not originally part of the collection is indicated by its place at the end of the pedigrees in CCCC 183 and Tiberius B v; and by its absence from the earliest manuscript Vespasian B vi, where the colophon marks the completeness of the text. This manuscript, written about 812, contains evidence that the royal genealogies were retouched in the last decade of the eighth century. At that time there were good reasons for neglecting the kings of Wessex in a Mercian compilation. Since Ine's day Wessex had been ruled by many kings whose pedigrees were obscure to the West Saxons themselves, if we may judge from the Chronicle. The latest of these, Beorhtric, had married Offa's daughter Eadburg, and with Offa's help had driven Ecgberht, the heir of Ine's family, into exile. Until Ecgberht had established himself after his accession in 802, and perhaps until his heirs were established, a Mercian genealogist might well disregard the hereditary claims of the West Saxon kings. But as Ecgberht's influence increased, the lack of a West Saxon genealogy would be felt even in Mercia. At a guess, I should name his time (802–39) as the likeliest for the addition of his ancestor Ine's pedigree to the collection.

The episcopal lists in CCCC 183 supply evidence of the time at which the Mercian compilation came South. Whereas the lists for Canterbury, Winchester, and the South-Western sees are brought up to about 937, those for Lichfield and other Midland bishoprics represent the position about 840: so presumably a parent manuscript of CCCC 183 and Tiberius B v (I shall sometimes use CT for any parent of these two) came South after 840 and may influence Southern documents after that date. That it was influential is suggested by the association of CCCC 183 with King Athelstan, and of Tiberius B v with Glastonbury and Canterbury Cathedral.

The absence from CCCC 183, copied at the height of West Saxon power, of any pedigrees for West Saxon kings later than Ine, is a sign that in this part it reproduces an early source. One could wish for sure evidence that Ine's pedigree, which has the characteristic Woden–Frealaf ending of the Mercian compilation, was incorporated in it before it reached Wessex; and there is some confirmation in the forms *Creoda* and *Celin*. *Creoda* (CT)

should be *Crīda* in standard West Saxon: all manuscripts of the Chronicle have *Crida* (*Cryda* Otho B xi according to Nowell and Wheloc) in the annal for 593, which possibly records the death of the Mercian king of the same name. *Celin* (CT), as Bede explains (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 5) and recorded examples confirm, is the Anglian form of West Saxon *Ceawlin*.[1]

(iii) The Historia Brittonum[2] is a bewildering compilation of old and new materials which was assembled and worked over by Nennius in the first half of the ninth century. One reviser (whether Nennius or Samuel) omitted the genealogical section: 'Set cum inutiles magistro meo, id est Beulano presbytero, uisae sunt genealogiae Saxonum et aliarum genealogiae gentium, nolui eas scribere' (ch. 63). The version which preserves them survives in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century manuscripts and contains lists for Bernicia, Kent down to Ecgberht (673), East Anglia, Mercia down to Ecgfrith (whose reign began and ended in 796), and Deira,[3] in that order; but not for Lindsey or Wessex.

These genealogies are related to the corresponding lists in Vespasian B vi, and the following points of comparison deserve notice:

(*a*) The Vespasian lists begin with the latest king in the trunk pedigree, and work backwards: e.g.

Eduine Aelling
Aelle Yffing, &c.;

and when the succession passes to a branch line, they start from the latest king and work backwards to the trunk pedigree, e.g.

Ecgfriδ Offing
Offa Ðincfriðing, &c.[4]

[1] On the forms and etymology, which are difficult, see O. S. Anderson *Old English Material in the Leningrad MS. of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, Lund 1941, p. 92.

[2] Ed. Mommsen in *Mon. Germ. Hist.* (1894); F. Lot *Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum*, 1934.

[3] Followed by some confused branch lists that should be attached to the main Bernician line.

[4] Given the method, and the information whether from written or oral sources, the presentation found in the Vespasian B vi group is inevitable. When the trunk pedigree ceases to provide the king in the direct line, it naturally ends. When a branch ceases to provide the king, it also ends. R. W. Chambers *Beowulf, an Introduction*, p. 196, relies on the argument that a written pedigree must have been drawn up during the reign of the latest king in a recorded line, but it has force only if a descendant of that king succeeded him. Of the latest kings in the four Northumbrian and four Mercian lines or branches included in Vespasian B vi, none was in fact succeeded by his son; so that a modern historian, using this form of pedigree, would take the same latest names for his starting-points.

In the *Historia Brittonum*, where the extant manuscripts do not use the tabular form, the trunk lists begin with the remotest ancestor (in this case Woden): e.g. 'UUoden genuit Beldeg, genuit Beornec, &c.' But the Mercian branches follow the English order, indicating that it was original, at least in the Mercian list: e.g. 'Ecgfrid filius Offa, filius Duminfert [*sic*], &c.' The more natural form of Vespasian B vi makes it easy to add names at the remote end of a pedigree, the more artificial order usual in the *Historia* is convenient for adding recent names.

(*b*) The extant manuscripts of the genealogies in the *Historia* show confusion of the Deiran with the Bernician line in the immediate descendants of Woden. This points to an earlier copy or source in which these lists stood side by side, as they do in Vespasian B vi. So the order in the *Historia* is not old, and may, like the omission of some names found in Vespasian B vi, be due to errors in transmission.

(*c*) The lists in the *Historia* start from Woden, not from Frealaf; they do not include the Mercian king Cenwulf who succeeded Ecgfrith in 796; and at least one name *Soemil* (Vesp. *Soemel*) keeps an older spelling. Their source, then, seems to have been a form slightly earlier than that of Vespasian B vi.[1] They also contain two names which are not in the Vespasian group of manuscripts, but are in Florence of Worcester's lists: *Gueagon* (Fl. *Waga*) as the son of *Guedolgeat* (*Waδolgeot*) in the Mercian pedigree, and *Sguerthing* instead of *Uestorualcna* in the Deiran.[2]

[1] In *Duminfert* [*sic*] the second element *-fert* for *-ferδ* shows that Nennius was not copying direct from Vespasian B vi which has *δincfriδ*. That CCCC 183 has *δingferþ* here is not necessarily significant; but there is some special relation between the contents of that MS. and the *Historia Brittonum*. Unlike Vespasian B vi it contains the Northumbrian regnal table which Nennius uses at chs. 63 f. It also begins a collection of computus material, &c. (some of which is found in Vespasian B vi) with the note that the Saxons were called in by Wyrtgeorn cccxlviiii years after Christ's Passion, during the consulship of Gratianus and Equitius. This appears in the *Historia* ch. 31, and has been the despair of editors: see F. Lot in his edition p. 172 n.; and Chadwick's objections to the general opinion that CCCC 183 borrows from the *Historia*, reported by M. R. James in his *Catalogue of the MSS. of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, i, p. 439 n.

[2] *Waga* may be a short form of *Waδolgeot*. *Suerting* is an epic name (*Beowulf* 1203), but in the *Historia* there is one clear example of the patronymic in *-ing* treated as if it were a primary name: *Eadlbald* filius *Alguing* for

Zimmer's contention[1] that English genealogies were already part of the *Historia Brittonum* at the end of the seventh century, and were later retouched, has not escaped challenge. Contact with a Mercian source not older than 796 is proved by the inclusion of Ecgfrith's line; the availability of such a Mercian source for all the lists is established by Vespasian B VI; and none of the many traces of an English original in the name-forms of the *Historia* requires a date earlier than 796. But the best ground for a decision is the selection of royal houses: Northumbria, Mercia, Lindsey, Kent, East Anglia in Vespasian B VI are what we might expect in Mercia under Offa;[2] and, except for Lindsey, the *Historia* gives the same pedigrees. A century earlier there were more kings to choose from; the outlook was different; and it would be hard to neglect Wulfhere's recent power in Mercia, or Ine's predominance in the South. I conclude that the genealogical tables were incorporated into the *Historia Brittonum* at the end of the eighth or in the first half of the ninth century, which is the period of Nennius's activity.

There remains the genealogy of Horsa and Hengest, through Woden to Geata, in a narrative part (ch. 31) of the *Historia Brittonum* which is generally thought to be old and which is fortunately preserved in the earliest manuscript. To this I shall return (p. 309 below).

(iv) The West Saxon Regnal Table. Bede refers to official reckonings of the reigns of English kings.[3] The earliest extant regnal list is that for Northumbria which appears at the end of the Moore MS. (*c.* 737) of his History,[4] and lists for Northumbria and Mercia are included in CT. Where the succession was regular from father to son, these lists correspond with the royal pedigree; and there was a risk of confusion, for a compiler of

Æðelbald Alwing of Vespasian B VI. Florence makes *Swaerta* the grandfather of Westorualcna, but he sometimes built up what he could collect from his sources into orderly lists; see Plummer in his edition of the Chronicle ii, p. 2.

[1] *Nennius Vindicatus* 1893. Mommsen, in his edition p. 117, agrees that the genealogies were first assembled in the seventh century; but see F. Lot in his edition pp. 91 ff.

[2] For the historical background, see Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England*, ch. vii.

[3] Cunctis regum tempora computantibus (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 1; cf. iii. 9). The Laws of Wihtred of Kent are dated in the fifth year of his reign, i.e. 695; cf. W. Levison *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, 1946, pp. 84 f., 270 ff.

[4] See P. H. Blair in *Chadwick Memorial Studies*, 1950, pp. 245 ff.

pedigrees, when dealing with remote times, might assume that successive kings were father and son, and so produce a false series.

The West Saxon regnal table includes two genealogies, Cerdic to Woden and Æthelwulf to Cerdic, which I shall call R^A and R^B. There are several copies,[1] but for present purposes three are enough: a Fragment in BM. MS. Addit. 23211 written in Alfred's reign;[2] the copy which prefaces the Parker Chronicle, written in or soon after 892; and another in Cambridge University Library MS. Kk. 3. 18[3] of the second half of the eleventh century. No one of these derives from another.

The Fragment begins with the years of Ecgberht's reign, continues with the accession of Æthelwulf, traces his pedigree to Cerdic (R^B), and then notes the reigns of his sons up to the accession of Alfred. R^B runs: Æðelwulf–Ecgberht–Ealhmund–Eaba–Eoppa–Ingild–Coenred–Ceolwald–Cuðuulf–Ceaulin–Cynnric–Criodo–Ceardic. As it contains the form *Eaba* for *Eafa*, it is usually said to be based on a record written as early as 750;[4] but medial and final *b* for *f* occurs in common words as late as 832 in Kentish charters,[5] so that it is not evidence of a written record before the ninth century. Between *Cynnric* and *Ceardic* the

[1] Stemmata in A. S. Napier *Modern Language Notes* xii (1897), pp. 110 f.; and E. Hackenberg *Die Stammtafeln*, &c., p. 8. N. R. Ker *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, 1941, p. 112 n. notes that Napier's MS. BM. Addit. 34652 f. 2 originally belonged to MS. Otho B XI. Professor Bruce Dickins in *The Genealogical Preface to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Cambridge 1952, prints the texts of the Parker MS., Tiberius A III (a leaf from Tiberius A VI with continuation to Edward the Martyr's reign), CCCC 383 (incomplete), and some excerpts entered in CCCC 138 by Robert Record in the sixteenth century. These last appear to be from MS. Kk. 3. 18.

[2] Printed by Sweet *O.E.T.* p. 179. This Fragment is one of two small leaves that have been used in a binding. It is headed by two lines of Roman numerals from i to xxviiii, written later than the text which begins: 'rice 7 heold xxxvii winf 7 vii monað; ond ða feng æ[ðelwulf], &c.'; the bracketed letters were cut away when the leaf was used for binding. The lower half of the page is occupied by the East Saxon genealogies also printed by Sweet, p. 179, and they completed this part of the text: the verso begins *Versus de Luñ* and ends with the heading *Versus de diebus*, so that more computus material in Latin followed. The other leaf, from the same MS., contains on both sides a fragment of the *Old English Martyrology*, ed. G. Herzfeld, E.E.T.S., 1900, with well-marked Mercian forms.

[3] In J. Schipper's *König Alfreds Übersetzung von Bedas Kirchengeschichte*, 1899, pp. 702 f.; and in T. Miller's edition (E.E.T.S.) i, pp. 496 f.

[4] Since Napier *M.L.N.* xii, pp. 110 f.

[5] Sweet *O.E.T.*, charters 38–40. *Liaba* for *Leofa* occurs in Alfred's charter of 873, Sweet's no. 32, and *ob* for *of* occurs in the Hatton MS. of *Pastoral Care*

fragment has *Criodo*,[1] and forms like this, as Sweet noted, indicate influence of or copying from a non-West Saxon dialect.

MS. Kk. 3. 18, a careful copy of Bede's History in the Old English version, has a complete form of the document, with Cerdic's pedigree (R^A) near the beginning: Cerdic–Elesa–(Esla)[2] – Gewis – Wig – Freawine – Freoðogar – Brond – Bældæg – Woden. Next it gives the length of reign for Cerdic and his successors: 'his son Cynric', Ceawlin, Ceol, Ceolwulf, &c. It does not say (as the Parker copy does) that Æthelheard and Beorhtric were descended from Cerdic, and the omission may possibly be deliberate, for Æthelheard's right was obscure,[3] and Beorhtric was the rival of Ecgberht. In tracing Æthelwulf's pedigree (R^B) to Cerdic, it adds the information, related to the Chronicle annal for 718, that Ine, Cuthburg, and Cwenburg, besides Ingild, were children of Cenred. It has the old spelling *Eaba*, and the error *Celming*, *Celm* where we should expect *Ceaulining*, *Ceaulin*. Creoda appears as Cerdic's son in this pedigree.

The Parker Chronicle MS., copied in or soon after 892, is given third place as a reminder that its greater age does not make it a better witness than MS. Kk. 3. 18. The copy of the regnal table it contains has the same names, not omitting *Esla*, in the pedigree of Cerdic (R^A). In the list of reigns it omits Ceawlin carelessly, and says both of Æthelheard and Beorhtric that their kin goes back to Cerdic. In the pedigree of Æthelwulf (R^B) it agrees with Kk. 3. 18 against the Fragment in the interpolation of Ine, Cuthburg, and Cwenburg, and in the error *Celming*, *Celm*; but it differs from Kk. 3. 18 and the Fragment in adopting the later spelling *Eafa*, and in the omission of Creoda. The omission is intentional, for the Parker MS. drops Creoda again in the Chronicle pedigree of Æthelwulf at 855, where other manuscripts of the Chronicle preserve it. In both places the purpose was to get rid of a name inconsistent with the Chronicle narrative, which makes Cynric the son of Cerdic.[4]

304/9 in the last decade of the ninth century. For Mercia, see the Worcester charter of Offa 791–6, Sweet's no. 15.

[1] The spelling *io* for the diphthong in *Criodo* was giving place to later *eo* in Alfred's time; see Sievers, *Zum Angelsächsischen Vocalismus*, 1900, pp. 39 f.

[2] The omission is probably due to a scribal error, but it is repeated in some other copies, e.g. the early twelfth-century fragment at the end of MS. CCCC 383.

[3] The Chronicle gives no indication of Æthelheard's claim; see below, pp. 336 f.

[4] See below, p. 299 and pp. 337 f.

Clearly the Parker and Cambridge University Library manuscripts derive from a copy (PCa.) made in Alfred's reign, which differed from the Fragment in having the added names Ine, Cuthburg, and Cwenburg, and the error *Celming*, *Celm*. So it ought not to be assumed that the part missing from the Fragment was identical with PCa. in the pedigree of Cerdic (R^A). Both the Fragment and PCa. derive from an earlier manuscript, still of Alfred's reign, which read in the pedigree of Æthelwulf (R^B): Ingild – Coenred – Ceolwald – Cuðuulf – Cuðuine – Celin – Cynric–Criodo–Ceardic. But this, with Ingild instead of his brother Ine, is the pedigree of Ine to Cerdic in CT (above, p. 290). CT alone preserved the Anglian forms *Celin(in)g*, *Celin*[1] which account for the error *Celming*, *Celm* in the Parker MS., in Kk. 3. 18, and in most later copies of R^B. CT and this part of the Regnal Table represent a single document. And the indications are that the CT pedigree was incorporated into the Regnal Table, not extracted from it. The inclusion of long pedigrees in a regnal table is exceptional; and incorporation of a series of names from another source would explain its discrepancies from the list of reigns which precedes it. Besides, it is unlikely that an excerptor, working in the later ninth century with the Regnal Table before him, would choose just this piece of Æthelwulf's pedigree, adding only the name of Frealaf.

(v) *Asser's Life* of King Alfred was completed in 893, and survived until the Cotton fire of 1731 in a single manuscript, written about the year 1000.[2] In his classic edition W. H. Stevenson shows that Asser used a copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which differed in some details from the extant manuscripts, and in some appears to have been nearer the original. In the first chapter Asser gives an elaborate genealogy of the West Saxon kings from Alfred to Adam. To this I shall return,[2] noting here that it includes Creoda between Cerdic and Cynric, although in the next chapter Cynric is described as the son of Cerdic in accordance with the Chronicle narrative.

[1] I assume that *Celin* was rightly understood as *Ceaulin* in R^B in the Fragment, though the scribe was troubled by it, for he wrote *ceaulniing* (the first *i* altered from *n*?); but that it was not recognized by the scribe of the copy from which the Parker, Cambridge, and several other extant MSS. derive.

[2] On the date of the lost MS. see Stevenson's edition pp. xxxii ff. especially § 23 and footnotes; and K. Sisam in *Review of English Studies* vii (1931), p. 8 n. Nothing in the pedigree of Æthelwulf suggests that the work is later than Alfred's time.

(vi) *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.* For the text of the genealogies which appear in the annals of the Chronicle issued about 892, we have the evidence of the Parker MS. copied in or soon after that year at Winchester; of Otho B xi (*c.* 1025), a copy of the Parker MS. which Wheloc printed in 1643 before it was badly damaged by fire;[1] of the Abingdon version represented by Tiberius A vi (*c.* 1000) and Tiberius B i (*c.* 1050); and of the Northern version in the Worcester MS. Tiberius B iv (*c.* 1050).

The Northumbrian pedigrees given are: 547 Ida to Woden and Geat; 670 Oswiu to Ida-Eoppa; 685 Ecgfrith to Ida-Eoppa; 731 Ceolwulf to Ida-Eoppa; 738 Eadbryht to Leodwald who is in the previous lists. Under 560 the independent Deiran line of Ælle is traced to Woden. The Mercian pedigrees are: 626 Penda to Woden; 716 Æthelbald to Pybba, Penda's father; 755 Offa to Woden through Pybba. The Kentish line from Wihtred to Æthelberht is given under 694. These non-West Saxon pedigrees are based on the same materials as those of Vespasian B vi, and most differences seem to be due to carelessness in the Chronicle. So in Penda's pedigree (626), *Watholgeot* is missing and *Angeltheow* is substituted for *Angengeot*; in Ælle's (560), *Soemel* is omitted and the archetype seems to have had *Westerfalena*, perhaps through misreading of the runic *wyn* as *f*; in Ceolwulf's (731), *Cuthwine* is preceded by the short form *Cutha*, as if that were the name of Cuthwine's son. Except that most of the lists stop at Woden, there is no decisive evidence of a relation with the *Historia Brittonum* against Vespasian B vi.

The West Saxon pedigrees, none of which occurs in Vespasian B vi, are: 552 Cynric–Cerdic to Woden; 597 Ceolwulf through Cynric–Cerdic to Woden; 611 Cynegils to Cynric; 674 Æscwine to Cynric–Cerdic; 676 Centwine to Ceolwulf; 685 Ceadwalla to Cynric–Cerdic; 688 Ine to Cynric–Cerdic. On Ine's abdication in 728[2] the pedigree of Oswald Ætheling is given. From that date up to and including 836 there is either no reference to the king's pedigree, or he is said to be of the kin of Cerdic. Then, under 855, Æthelwulf's lineage is traced back to Adam, and with this culmination of the genealogist's art, the Chronicle series ends.

[1] This is useful where the pedigrees in the Parker MS. have been erased. A distorted leaf of the MS. survives for Æthelwulf's pedigree of 855. Laurence Nowell's transcript of this MS. is now available in BM. Addit. 43703.

[2] I give the dates of annals from Plummer's print of the Parker MS. throughout without inquiring whether there are reasons, as here, for thinking them to be inaccurate.

II

The Genealogy of Æthelwulf

Having now surveyed the documents up to the end of the ninth century, I shall examine the genealogy of Æthelwulf, entered in the Chronicle under the year 855, in six sections: (1) up to Ingild; (2) Ingild (or his brother Ine) to Cerdic; (3) Cerdic to Woden; (4) Woden to Geat; (5) beyond Geat; (6) Biblical names. The names are usually cited from the Parker MS.

(1) *To Ingild*: Æþelwulf–Ecgbryht–Ealhmund–Eafa–Eoppa–Ingild. The Regnal Table (R^B) and Asser agree with the Chronicle. Of the names between Ecgberht and Ingild nothing is known, except a credible late tradition, recorded by a late-eleventh-century hand in the Canterbury Chronicle Domitian A viii (= F) at 784, that this Ealhmund was king of Kent.

(2) *Ingild to Cerdic*: Ingild–Cenred–Ceolwald–Cuþa–Cuþwine – Ceawlin – Cynric (– Creoda) – Cerdic. Creoda is in the Abingdon (B, C) and Northern (D) versions; and his omission from the Parker MS. is due to a late-ninth-century editor who aimed at bringing the genealogy into line with the Chronicle narrative.[1] Asser, who preserves the older form *Coenred* for *Cenred* of the Parker MS., agrees in this part with the archetype of the Chronicle which was circulated about 892. Both agree with R^B in the Regnal Table, except that they have the short form *Cuþa* for *Cuþwulf*. And we have seen (p. 297 above) that in this series of names R^B agrees exactly with CT, and probably derives from it. The consensus is important because the other relevant West Saxon pedigrees in the archetype of the Chronicle of 892, viz. those at 597, 674, 685, 688, are inconsistent with one another, and Æthelwulf's pedigree from Ingild to Cerdic could not be deduced from them.[2] So this part of the 'official' royal pedigree of Alfred's time derives from an independent tradition, of which

[1] See above p. 296 for the omission of Creoda from R^B of the Regnal Table in the Parker MS.; cf. pp. 337 f. below.

[2] Plummer *Two Saxon Chronicles* ii, p. 2: 'It is lost labour to try and reconcile these inconsistencies.' G. H. Wheeler *English Historical Review* xxxvi uses these annals to construct a pedigree (p. 167) of the West Saxon kings after Cerdic, but is obliged to make several doubtful assumptions. E. Hackenberg *Die Stammtafeln*, &c., gets a very different table (p. 3) from the same materials. The evidence is insufficient to establish the true relationships of the kings who claimed to be descendants of Cerdic.

CF seems to give the earliest form. That tradition is not obviously wrong; and its first clear appearance in Æthelwulf's pedigree at 855 in the Chronicle of 892 fits, though it does not establish, the suggestion that the pedigree of Ine to Cerdic was in CT when it came south after 840 (above p. 291).

(3) *Cerdic to Woden*: Cerdic–Elesa–Esla–Giwis–Wig–Freawine–Friþogar–Brond–Bældæg–Woden. Here the pedigrees under 552 and 597 agree with 855. R. W. Chambers, who gives the latest survey of the genealogies, brings out the alliterative structure by printing:

> (Cynric Cerdicing), Cerdic Elesing,
> Elesa Esling, Esla Giwising,
> Giwis Wiging, Wig Freawining,
> Freawine Friðogaring, Friðogar Bronding,
> Brond Bældæging, Bældæg Wodening.[1]

He comments: 'These lines are probably very old. . . . Note, that not only do the names alliterate, but the alliteration is perfect. Every line attains double alliteration in the first half, with one alliterating word only in the second half. The lines must go back to times when lists of royal ancestors, both real and imaginary, had to be arranged in correct verse; times when such things were recorded by memory rather than by writing. They are pre-literary, and were doubtless chanted by retainers of the West-Saxon kings in heathen days.'

Yet this perfection raises doubts. As late as 1066 verses like

> Cyning cystum god clæne and milde
> Eadward se æðela eðel bewerede

were composed with triple alliteration, and there is no good evidence that uniform triple alliteration was ancient practice. Again, no other Anglo-Saxon genealogy shows the arrangement by regularly changing alliterative pairs; and it was certainly not the custom of Wessex in historical times. From Cerdic to the end of the seventh century, most West Saxon kings' names alliterate on *C*. For some reason Cenred did not become king, though he survived to advise Ine on his code of laws;[2] and, for some reason

[1] *Beowulf, An Introduction* (1932), p. 316.

[2] See the preface to *Ine's Laws*, ed. Liebermann i, p. 88. It is likely enough, in view of the family history, that Cenred had entered the religious life; cf. Liebermann *Gesetze* iii, p. 67; but the choice of names for his sons still needs explanation. Possibly there was danger in being an ostensible claimant to the throne.

he broke away from the *C* alliteration in naming his sons Ine and Ingild, while retaining it for his daughters Cuthburg and Cwenburg. As a consequence, West Saxon and English kings' names have vowel alliteration from the year 802, when Cenred's descendant Ecgberht recovered the throne, till the line ended with Edgar the Atheling after the Norman Conquest. Given continuous hereditary succession, it was not hard to maintain this tradition; Æthelwulf named his sons Æthelbald, Æthelbryht, Æthelred, and Ælfred, and they succeeded in turn. But by what foresight could it be arranged, in the troubled days of migration and conquest, that the names of successive kings would make such perfect verse? We should have to suppose that some ancestor—Brand for instance—noticed that his name made a verse with those of his father Bældæg and his grandfather Woden; and, to provide the opportunity for a second verse, avoided a name beginning with *B* for that one of his sons who was to be ancestor of the West Saxon kings. Then that son, Frithogar, had to prepare the first half of a verse for himself by giving his son a name like *Freawine*, with initial *F*, and so on. Even if we discard the theory that kings were elected it is unlikely that early history was planned in this way. But the alternative is that the perfect verse pedigree is wholly or partly fictitious.

Here are three extracts from recorded genealogies:

UUoden	Woden	Woden
Belde(g)	Bældæg	Bældæg
Brond	Brand	Brand
Geuuis	Giwis	Benoc
Elesa	Aluca	Aloc
Cerdic	Cerdic	Angenwit [*sic*]

The first is the text of Asser, confirmed by the transcripts, before Stevenson's standard edition, following Wise (1722), conflated it with the 855 pedigree of Æthelwulf. The second is from the pedigree of Ine in CT (CCCC 183 agreeing with Tiberius B v) which has cropped up so often already as a probable source. With this support the manuscript text of Asser must stand. Evidently he had before him a version of the 855 pedigree, which in this part corresponded name by name with the pedigree from Ine to Woden in CT; which lacked the extraordinary alliterative regularity of the Chronicle list from Cerdic to Woden; and which is prima facie an earlier form of that list. Then either he transcribed a pedigree which was the basis of the Chronicle list, or he used a copy of the Chronicle which contained the 855

entry in an earlier form. Since the 855 annal is known to us only from the version circulated in 892, there is no evidence that it existed in exactly the same form before that date.[1]

Any way through the surface of a major historical source deserves to be explored; so at this point I shall digress, using conjecture to avoid an impasse.

The third column above is an extract from the pedigree of the Northumbrian king Ida as given in the Chronicle under 547. Its correspondence with the others is the more remarkable because *Aloc* represents *Alusa* of the Vespasian group, and *Aluson* of the *Historia Brittonum*.[2] Historians and ethnologists have been puzzled to find the West Saxon genealogy joining with the Bernician in Brand–Bældæg–Woden,[3] where Seaxnet, the god of the Saxons, or at least a separate line from Woden might have been expected. Besides, according to the Chronicle, Ida may have been born before Cerdic died; yet in CT Brand is Cerdic's third and Ida's seventh ancestor. The explanation is, I believe, that Cerdic's pedigree was copied from this part of Ida's, and that *Giwis* was substituted afterwards to give it a West Saxon colouring. The substitution exactly at this point might be made because the association of Bernic with Bernicia was obvious. Bernic, who appears only in the pedigree of Ida, is generally

[1] Unfortunately the early Fragment of the Regnal Table does not contain Cerdic's pedigree (R^A). The slightly later complete texts have the longer alliterative form; but as they all derive from a version which shows retouching of R^B (p. 297 above), the possibility cannot be excluded that the shorter form originally stood in R^A, as in CT and Asser.

[2] The corresponding part of Ida's pedigree in the Vespasian group varies from the Chronicle, but the name-elements are the same: Woden–Beldæg–Be(o)rnic–Wegbrand–Ingibrand–Alusa–Angengeot. The *Historia Brittonum* has Woden–Beldeg–Beornec–Gechbrond (for *Guechbrond*, but *Brond* appears in the corrupted Deiran pedigree)–Aluson–Inguec [*sic*]. *Alusa* is otherwise unknown; so is *Elesa*, unless it has the same etymology as *Elsa* in *Widsith* 117 (see R. W. Chambers's note in his edition, p. 220). *Aluca* (Chronicle *Aloc*) is formed like *Baduca*, and occurs in the Durham *Liber Vitae*: see R. Müller *Untersuchungen über die Namen des nordhumbrischen Liber Vitae*, 1901, pp. 72 ff. and 140 f. It may have been substituted for *Alusa* in Cerdic's pedigree in CT as the more familiar form, and there is a possibility of confusing *s* and *c* in some early majuscule hands.

[3] Müllenhoff *Beovulf*, pp. 65 f. notes the similarity of names in the two pedigrees. Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, pp. 60 f. considers and rejects the possibility that names in Ida's pedigree may be borrowed from Cerdic's, but overlooks the converse possibility, although the Northumbrian pedigree is on record nearly a century before the West Saxon. E. Hackenberg *Die Stammtafeln*, &c., p. 115 suggests borrowing by the West Saxon pedigree.

regarded as an eponymous king derived from the name of the Bernicians,[1] and Giwis, who appears only in the pedigree of Cerdic, seems to be derived in the same way from *Gewisse*, a name for the West Saxons which was already antiquated in Bede's time[2] and which only the Welsh preserved.[3]

It is more likely that the Northumbrian names were adopted by some mistake than that they were deliberately taken by a pedigree-maker. In the extant manuscripts of the *Historia Brittonum* the Deiran pedigree begins Woden–Beldeyg–Brond–Siggar instead of Woden–Wegdæg–Siggar in the Vespasian group and the Chronicle (560); and in Tiberius B v, eight kings from the Bernician Regnal Table appear as predecessors of Offa in the Mercian table which stands beside it. But the condition for such erroneous transfers is that the lists affected should be adjacent (above p. 293); there is reason to think that West Saxon royal pedigrees were not included at all in early collections like Vespasian B vi; and it is unlikely that the Bernician and West Saxon lists would be side by side in any early systematic collection. Again, my conjecture requires a transfer from a version of Ida's pedigree for which the Chronicle itself is the witness.[4]

[1] See, e.g., J. E. Lloyd *A History of Wales* i (1911), p. 163.

[2] *Hist. Eccl.* iii, p. 7. Had Bede known of a leader Gewis from whom the people took their name, he would hardly have missed this opportunity of saying so. Cf. Plummer's note to Bede ii, pp. 88 f.; Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, p. 33 and p. 156 n.; Stevenson on Asser, pp. 161 f.

In the Chronicle *gi-*, which is an earlier form of the prefix *ge-*, occurs only in *Giwis*. Except for this name, the prefix is regularly *ge-* in early West Saxon, early Kentish, and Mercian (there are examples of *gi-* in the oldest glossaries which are composite). In Northumbrian *gi-* is common early and late; but the almost contemporary MSS. of Bede's *History* have already *Geuisse*. *Gi(wis)* occurs in Welsh records, and probably preserves the form the English suffix had when the name was borrowed. So *Giwis* in CT and the archetype of the Chronicle of 892 (855 Parker MS. *Giwising*, *Giwis*; 597 Parker MS. *Gewising*, *Giwis*; 552 MS. B *Giwising*, *Giwis*) is best explained by ultimate borrowing from a Welsh written source and mechanical copying of the unfamiliar name thereafter. Here and elsewhere (see below, p. 338 and n. and p. 341) we have to do with the transcription of an old name, not with the recording of a living tradition. The lack of such a tradition is confirmed by the fanciful development of this antiquarian people-name. Besides a name for Cerdic's ancestor, *Giwisse* provided a name for the land of the English in *Textus Roffensis*, and for an emperor's daughter in Geoffrey of Monmouth: see Stevenson loc. cit.

[3] Asser's version of the pedigree has: *Gewis, a quo Britones totam illam gentem Gegwis nominant*. On the use in Anglo-Saxon charters see Stevenson's note; and G. M. Young *Last Essays*, 1950, p. 128.

[4] The identical list in Simeon of Durham ii, p. 366 is presumably derived from the Chronicle.

To meet these conditions I propose a solution which is necessarily speculative. Ida ruled in the time of Cynric, who is always associated with Cerdic, as his son, in the Chronicle narrative. And it is common ground that before the Chronicle there were older collections of short annals.[1] Suppose two successive entries:

> Her Ida feng to rice on Norðhymbrum.
> Her Cynric Cerdicing[2] gefeaht wiþ Brettas æt Searobyrig.

If later the pedigree of Ida were added to the first entry in the margin, it might spill over so that the latter part of it lay alongside the second entry. By this accident, Cerdic might appear as *Alusing* (or the like), and be assigned the Woden end of Ida's pedigree in a later copy. Two entries very near to these do in fact come together in the finished Chronicle, at 547 and 552, the first ending with a pedigree of Ida, the second with a pedigree of Cerdic. And as Cerdic and Cynric are mentioned in six previous annals, there is no obvious reason why their pedigree should be entered just here unless it is connected with or suggested by Ida's. But if the appearance of these two pedigrees together is significant, the assumed manuscript collection of annals would not only be the source of Cerdic's genealogy: it would have a place somewhere in the pedigree of the Chronicle narrative, and represent the stage in which the longer royal pedigrees from the Mercian compilation, known to us from Vespasian B vi and CT, appeared as accretions to short annals. I must in any case assume that the alliterative pedigree of Cerdic which stands in the developed Chronicle at 552, instead of the short pedigree supposed to originate there, has been carried through by a ninth-century editor, so that 552, 597, and 855 should agree: in a point so important disagreement would be intolerable. There is yet another implication: that the pedigree of Ida beyond *Angenwit*, which stands at 547, is a replacement of the part transferred to

[1] e.g. Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 20 ff. and 682; Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, pp. 26 ff.; Plummer in his edition of the Chronicle ii, p. cxii n.

[2] The Kentish kings descended from Hengest's son Oisc were called *Oiscingas* (Bede ii. 5); the East Anglian kings descended from Wuffa were called *Wuffingas* (Bede ii. 15). Felix in his life of Guthlac, written before 749, mentions Penwald, a Mercian of royal lineage descended from Icil, and the much later Old English version says the family were called *Icilingas* (ed. P. Gonser, Heidelberg, 1909, p. 104). So to describe Cynric as *Cerdicing* leaves unprejudiced the question whether he was Cerdic's son or his grandson through Creoda, and may possibly explain how the conflicting traditions arose.

Cerdic,[1] and is not necessarily identical with it: the original entry may have had *Bernic* for *Benoc*, and *Alusa* (possibly *Ealusa* or a form nearer *Elesa*) not *Aloc*.

The reader who is invited to consider the probability of such a chain of hypotheses may well ask when and where Ida's pedigree is supposed to have been inserted in the annals and misdivided. But there is not enough evidence. The mistake might be made soon after or long after the insertion. If the indications noted at p. 291 above are accepted, this mistake had been recorded in Mercia by about 840; if they are found insufficient, there is no evidence of it until Alfred's time, when it seems to be deep-seated. As the place and time most likely for the insertion of Ida's pedigree, and its confusion with Cerdic's, I have in mind Wessex in Ecgberht's reign (802–39).

However this detailed conjecture may be judged, if the framework of Cerdic's pedigree is somehow borrowed from Ida's, his real pedigree was almost certainly unknown. But that conclusion hardly strengthens the argument that Cerdic himself is a fiction. This Saxon invader with a Celtic name, who is described as *ealdorman* 'leader' by the Chronicle itself (495), may well have been *dux ex virtute*, not *rex ex nobilitate*, and so have had no remembered pedigree.

If no more is granted than the priority of the shorter form of Cerdic's pedigree, on the evidence of Asser and CT, then the suspiciously regular alliterative form is a fiction elaborated from it, probably in the ninth century, and is not a very ancient mnemonic in verse.

But we need not suppose that it was specially composed for the Chronicle circulated in 892: more probably, the compiler or editor knew it as an existing alternative, and preferred it because it gave more names and was more elegant in literary form. The motives for such an elaboration were comparatively innocent: flattery of the ruling house, emulation of the long lines that joined other English kings to Woden, or the desire to find a place for distinguished names that were remembered in no other pedigree or Liber Vitae. Materials were always at hand, because a true series of royal fathers and sons would contain only some of the great hereditary kings,[2] and would exclude most of the tribal gods and heroes, as well as unattached names from the

[1] See below, p. 312.

[2] For example, Ine was not in the direct line from Ecgberht to Cerdic; and Penda's son Wulfhere was not in the main Mercian line. Nor is there any place in the Anglo-Saxon pedigrees for famous ancestors on the female side.

common stock of legend. Old names are the stuff from which fictitious pedigrees are made, and must not be regarded as evidence of genuineness.

The conditions favourable to the production and establishment of the elaborate versified form are easy to define. The added names should be remote and timeless, so that their order is at the convenience of the versifier; they should not conflict with other well-known pedigrees; and the framework into which they are fitted must not be firmly fixed in tradition, so that doubts are raised by dislocation of its familiar order. The last condition is satisfied if Cerdic's pedigree had come into existence fairly recently through a mistake.

It will help the examination of the added names to distinguish them by brackets from the framework: Cerdic–Elesa–(Esla)–Giwis–(Wig–Freawine–Frithogar)–Brand–Bældæg–Woden. *Esla* is otherwise unknown in English, and is curiously like *Elesa* —too like if *Elesa* is etymologically the same name as *Elsa* in *Widsith* 117. *Frithogar* is not unusual, though no great chief or hero of that name is recorded. But Freawine and Wig, father and son, belong to heroic legend.

The chief Mercian genealogy in the Vespasian group gives the descending series: Woden–Waðolgeot–Uihtlæg–Uermund–Offa–Angengeot–Eamer–Icil, &c. Danish tradition, recorded first in the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century Latin of Sven Aageson and Saxo Grammaticus, preserves a story of King Wermundus, son of Wiglet (= Wihtlæg) and father of Uffo (= Offa). With them are associated an ally or sub-king, Frowinus (= Freawine), his son Wigo, and his daughter whom Offa married.[1] There are strong reasons why their story should be well known among the Mercians. The great King Offa (†796) seems to have taken special pride in the ancestor to whom he owed his name, and perhaps had in mind an accomplishment of the older Offa when he fixed his boundaries by building Offa's Dyke.[2] The story of the first Offa is referred to in *Widsith* 35–44;[3] and in *Beowulf* 1944–62, where Wermund also probably appears

[1] For details see Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, ch. vi. Whether the Danish tradition is independent of the English is disputed; but in any case, it probably differs considerably from the story told in England three or four centuries earlier.

[2] See Sir Cyril Fox *The Boundary Line of Cymru* (Brit. Acad. 1940), pp. 20 f.

[3] Ed. R. W. Chambers, 1912, Introd. pp. 84 ff. It should not be assumed that this passage in *Widsith* was composed in the seventh century. Few texts offer such opportunities for accretion or show more signs that the opportunities were taken.

(miswritten *Garmund*), with Eomer (miswritten *Geomor*) who is described as his grandson. Its persistence in the Midlands and its association with the Mercian Offa are proved by the *Vitae Duorum Offarum* written at St. Albans in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[1]

English literary sources do not mention Wig or Freawine, and they could not be expected to appear in incidental references like those in *Beowulf* and *Widsith*. But it can hardly be doubted that they had a prominent part in the full story as it was told at the Mercian court, and I regard Cerdic's pedigree as evidence for it. A West Saxon embellisher of pedigrees would not dare to claim Wermund and Offa of Angel while Offa of Mercia and his pedigree were freshly remembered. But Freawine and Wig, the illustrious associates of Wermund and Offa, were claimed by no other dynasty; and during the period of Mercian predominance that ended with Beorhtric in 802, the analogy of existing relations may have established them in legend as Saxon rulers in the Continental home-land.

In the arrangement given below, it will be seen that, by the mere accident that has been supposed, the first and last lines set the unusual pattern of Cerdic's longer pedigree. If Wig and Freawine are added after Giwis, another verse is produced to the pattern, and alliteration fixes the place of insertion:

Cynric Cerdicing, Cerdic Elesing,
Elesa X-ing, X Giwising,
Giwis Wiging, Wig Freawining,
Freawine Y-ing, Y Bronding,
Brond Bældæging Bældæg Wodening.

It would be straining coincidence to suppose that *Esla* arose by the accident of dittography; but to perfect the artificial verse form would call for no more technical ingenuity than the replacement of X by any name beginning with a vowel, and of Y by any name beginning with F.

(4) *Woden to Geat* (Parker MS.): Woden Friþowalding, Friþuwald Frealafing,[2] Frealaf Friþuwulfing, Friþuwulf Finning, Fin Godwulfing, Godwulf Geating. Of these Friþuwald, Frealaf, Friþuwulf, Godwulf are known only from genealogies. Finn is a Frisian king of heroic legend, Geat a god.

[1] Chambers *Beowulf, an Introduction*, pp. 217–43 prints the relevant parts.

[2] MS. *Freawining*.

Few will dissent from the general opinion[1] that the ancestors of Woden were a fanciful development of Christian times. There is no evidence of an ancient tradition about them among the Germanic peoples of the Continent and Scandinavia. Bede gives no hint of pedigrees going beyond Woden. The lists in the *Historia Brittonum* begin with him. Cerdic's pedigree (R^) in the West Saxon Regnal Table, important because it is a text of Alfred's time earlier even in this part than the Parker MS., ends with Woden; and so do the Chronicle pedigrees, except Æthelwulf's under 855 and Ida's under 547.[2]

The genesis of a fiction is often easier to explain than that of an historical event. The need for an extension beyond Woden would first arise when a royal pedigree up to Woden had become settled in tradition or in authoritative records. Until then, there was still room for more names of old kings, heroes, and gods among his descendants. Thereafter, anybody who wished to express national pride or literary ingenuity by embroidering the genealogy had the choice of either adding names behind Woden, or producing a conflicting tradition which would raise doubts. And whoever first added names behind Woden in a king's pedigree had a good chance of general acceptance; for he gave new information where before there was nothing, and though Woden might have three sons or seven, he could have only one father, father's father, &c.

I take the documents according to the order in which their texts may be reckoned to have become fixed:

(i) *Vespasian B vi*: Frealaf, who appears as the father of Woden in all the genealogies of this manuscript, may be a hero or divinity who was remembered by the Mercians. His name seems to be a very recent addition, and only the pedigree of the kings of Lindsey goes beyond him: Frealaf Frioðulfing, Frioðulf Finning, Finn Goduulfing, Godulf Geoting.[3] All that we know of the

[1] See, e.g., R. W. Chambers *Beowulf, an Introduction*, pp. 320 ff.

[2] See below, pp. 311 f.

[3] In Vespasian B vi **gaut* appears regularly as *Geot-, -geot*. Of nine examples four are in the Northumbrian and five in the Mercian lists; so these forms, common in southern Northumbria (Bülbring *Altenglisches Elementarbuch*, § 108) were current in the central Mercian dialect of Lichfield. The South-Western MS. CCCC 183 (*c.* 937) has *Geating* (once), *-geot* five times, and the bad spelling *-giot* thrice; Tiberius B v (*c.* 1000) has *Eating* (once, perhaps by confusion with *Eata*) and *-geot* eight times. The *Historia Brittonum* derives from a source with *ea* spellings, which perhaps came from south Mercia. Although *gaut* was a very productive element in Germanic personal names (see Förstemann *Altdeutsches Namenbuch* s.v.), it seems to have become rarer in late Anglo-Saxon times, and to have troubled copyists. In the Chronicle *Angengeot* becomes *Angenwit* (through *-iut?*) in the pedigree of Ida (547) and *Angelþeow* in the pedigree of Penda (626, 755).

kings of Lindsey depends on this list, and on Stenton's convincing identification of *Aldfrið*, the latest name in it, with *Ealdfrid rex* who attests Offa's confirmation of a Sussex charter between 786 and 796.[1] His attendance on Offa gives a reason for including the obscure kings of this small and isolated kingdom in a Mercian compilation recorded soon after Offa's reign. And if the Lindsey pedigree was added to an older collection in Aldfrith's day, that would explain why the names from Friothulf to Geat are not carried through to the rest of the pedigrees in Vespasian B vi. It would explain, too, why the Lindsey pedigree is not in the tables of the *Historia Brittonum*, which derive from an earlier state of the collection.[2]

(ii) *Historia Brittonum*: So far, the indications favour a date round about the end of the eighth century for the extension to Geat. But what of the pedigree of Horsa and Hengest in the narrative of the *Historia Brittonum*, ch. 31, where the Chartres MS., whatever its value for the whole text, is the earliest witness?[3] It reads: '. . . Uuoden, filii Frelab, filii Freudulf, filii Fran [*for* Finn], filii Folcpald [*for* Folcwald], filii G⟨e⟩uta [*for* Geata], qui *fuit*, ut aiunt, filius dei, non deus exercituum, set unus ex idolis que ipsi colebant.'[4] Here Folcwald, the father of Finn in heroic poetry (*Widsith* 27, *Beowulf* 1089), replaces *Godwulf*, who appears in all other versions of the Woden-Geat series.[5] Most

[1] 'Lindsey and its Kings' in *Essays in History* presented to R. L. Poole, 1927, pp. 136 ff.

[2] Above, p. 293.

[3] It has usually been assigned to the late ninth or early tenth century; but C. Samaran (quoted by F. Lot *Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum* i, p. 31), after an expert examination, inclines to the second half of the tenth century.

[4] On *Frelab* for *Frealaf* see p. 295, n. 5. *Freudulf* has the diphthong *eu* (for older *iu*, Vesp. B vi *Frioðulf*) which no other MS. of the *Historia* preserves. *Geuta*, corrected from *Guta*, is probably due to misreading the open or *u*-shaped form of *a*, which occurs both in Insular and Continental scripts. The other MSS. have *Geata*, except *Ieta* in Bibl. Nat. lat. 11108 which derives from an English recension of the late tenth or early eleventh century. The error *Fran* for *Finn* seems to be reflected in the Irish translation, said to be of the late eleventh century, which has *Finn–Frenn–Folcuald*.

[5] In the English genealogical tables Finn appears as the son of Godwulf. In the *Historia Brittonum*, *Widsith*, and *Beowulf* he is the son of Folcwald(a). The discrepancy does not require the assumption of two Finns, or two names for the Frisian hero's father. This is a fictitious, not a real pedigree. The unknown Godwulf alliterates with and is probably associated with Geat, who has a key position. Then if an unrelated hero Finn is to be included, a false

critics of the *Historia* before F. Lot seem to agree that this part of the narrative is old—perhaps as early as the seventh century.[1] But in a work which was certainly revised as late as the first quarter of the ninth century, there can be no assurance that this genealogy as a whole, or any detail in it, belongs to the old narrative. The concurrence of the Chartres and later manuscripts proves at most that it was part of the text issued by Nennius in the first half of the ninth century. But that is about the time at which special attention was given to the English genealogies. And certainly one man dealt with this passage and with the collection of genealogies at chs. 57 ff.; for there the other royal houses are derived from Woden, but the Kentish kings are not traced beyond Hengest because his pedigree is given at ch. 31.

Two fortunate chances help us in this case. First Bede, who was particularly well informed about Kentish history and tradition, gives the pedigree of Hengest and Horsa with no extension beyond Woden. Secondly, misspellings in the manuscripts of the *Historia Brittonum* prove that *Folcwald* derives from an original in which *w* was represented by the runic letter *wyn*.[2] It has been assumed that this use of *wyn* in English writing is very old, because it occurs in the charter of Oethilred, dated 692–3.[3] But there are other reasons for thinking that this is not a contemporary charter, but a copy made perhaps a century later.[4] I have noticed no example of *wyn* in English manuscripts that can be assigned to the first half of the eighth century with confidence.[5] It appears

linking is inevitable. If the composer of the fiction thought of the difficulty, he could justify himself by the argument that Folcwald had no better claim to be Geata's son or Godwulf's than had Finn.

[1] See R. Thurneysen *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* xxviii, pp. 100 f.

[2] See Mommsen in his edition, Introd., p. 142. It follows that the compiler was using an English written source.

[3] So W. Keller *Angelsächsische Palaeographie*, 1906, p. 12. There is a facsimile in *Ancient Charters in the British Museum*, 1873, pl. ii.

[4] K. Sisam *Cynewulf and his Poetry*, p. 25; and *Studies in the History of OE. Literature*, 1953, p. 92 n.

[5] I do not accept as strictly contemporary Æthelbald's charter of 742 in Sweet *Oldest English Texts*, p. 432; facsimile in Ordnance Survey *Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon MSS.*, vol. i, 1878. There is no example of *wyn* in St. Willibrord's Calendar of the early eighth century, or in the many names in Bede (Moore MS. *c.* 737, and Leningrad MS. *c.* 746). Its absence from the monumental script of the Durham *Liber Vitae* (early ninth century) is less significant for ordinary usage. It is fairly common in the Corpus Glossary, which Sweet (*O.E.T.*, p. 5) dated in the first half of the eighth century, but which is now assigned to the late eighth or early ninth centuries (E. A. Lowe *Codices Latini Antiquiores* ii, no. 122). In the Epinal Glossary *wyn* is scarce and sometimes crudely adapted to Latin script, but the date of the MS. is disputed. Sweet in the facsimile edition (E.E.T.S. 1883), p. xi argued for the early eighth century against Maunde Thompson's opinion that it was early ninth. The question is primarily one for Latin palaeography, and the latest and best authority, Lowe in *Codices Latini Antiquiores* vi (1953), description of pl. 760, prefers the first half of the eighth century; but in the practice of the Epinal MS. the chance of *wyn* being used for any one instance of *w* is small.

increasingly, though irregularly, in the latter part of the eighth century; but there is no instance, for example, in the original Sussex charter of Oslac dated 780, and its later confirmation by Offa;[1] *u*, *uu* are commoner in the early ninth-century Mercian Vespasian B vi; and as late as the beginning of the tenth century they are sometimes preferred.[2] The question requires more study, but unless earlier examples of *wyn* can be established, this indication suggests that *Folcwald* came into the text of the *Historia* not earlier than the second half of the eighth century; *Freudulf* is not a very old form; and the whole line from Woden to Geat may have been added by Nennius at the beginning of the ninth century. Evidence that Finn in this genealogy was so early understood to be the Frisian king is welcome.[3]

(iii) *Chronicle*: It is convenient to take the Chronicle before Asser.

Ida's pedigree at 547 runs in the Abingdon version (both manuscripts): Woden–Freoþelaf–Friþulf–Finn–Godulf–Geat. If *Freopelaf*[4] is an error for *Frealaf*, this agrees with the Lindsey pedigree of Vespasian B vi; and with the *Historia Brittonum* except in its reading *Folcwald* for *Godwulf*. The pedigree has been erased from the Parker MS., the other independent witness to the text; but the fire-damaged manuscript Otho B xi, which was a close copy of the Parker MS., omits Frealaf (or Freoþelaf),

[1] Published in facsimile by W. de G. Birch, 1892.

[2] e.g. in the original charter of Wærferth dated 904 in *Facsimiles of Ancient Charters in the British Museum*, vol. iii. In Caroline minuscule *uu* was retained for the spelling of English names, e.g. in the MS. of Æthelweard's Chronicle composed after 975.

[3] The balance of probability is against *Folcwald* being the earlier reading in the genealogies and *Godwulf* a later substitution. For, apart from the isolation of the *Historia* among the witnesses, it is unlikely that a reading *Finn Folcwalding*, supported by epic tradition, would be replaced by *Finn Godwulfing*. Presumably Nennius had access to an English form of the Kentish pedigree which had been influenced by the legend of Finn. F. Lot's view, op. cit., pp. 93 f. and 171 n., that Nennius simply transferred these names from the Lindsey pedigree in Vespasian B vi by a mistake, fails to account for *Folcwald*.

[4] This name occurs nowhere else in English genealogies but is prominent in Danish royal pedigrees. It should be regarded as a scribal error, due to *Freopewulfing* which follows immediately.

giving Woden–Friþowulf–Finn–Godwulf–Geat.[1] There are two possibilities: the one that *Frealaf*, which is represented in all other versions of this series, was omitted by scribal error from Otho B xi (and presumably the Parker MS.); the other, more remote, that an older tradition omitted *Frealaf*; for it is conceivable that, in the Lindsey pedigree, his name is an intrusion from the other lists in Vespasian B vi. It remains to note that the extension from Woden to Geat at 547,[2] which is unique in the Chronicle before the great pedigree of 855, fits in with my conjecture that Cerdic's short pedigree was taken from Ida's. The conjecture implies that the remoter part of Ida's pedigree, as it now stands in the Chronicle, is a late replacement of the part from Alusa to Woden which was erroneously transferred to Cerdic.

In Æthelwulf's pedigree under 855 the Parker MS. gives: Woden – Friþuwald – Frealaf[3] – Friþuwulf – Finn – Godwulf – Geat. Here Friþuwald, who cannot be identified with any probability, has been added to the usual series. But the Abingdon (B, C) and Northern (D) Chronicles, and the list in Tiberius B v,[4] have neither the new name Friþuwald, nor Friþuwulf, both of which are in Asser and Æthelweard. This raises a question of some importance for the textual criticism of the Chronicle: which of the two lists offered by the extant manuscripts was in the archetype of the Chronicle of 892?

A curious point of form also deserves notice, now that all the variants of the series from Woden to Geat have been assembled. Although alliteration controls the variations, none of the recorded versions continues the alliterative scheme discussed at pp. 300 ff. above. In the first and last lines the lists[5] will run, e.g.

Woden Frealafing	Frealaf Finning
Finn Godwulfing,	Godwulf Geating

[1] Nowell's transcript and Wheloc's print show that in Otho B xi Ælle's pedigree at 560 ended: *Woden Friþuwulfing*. The scribe, probably following the Parker MS. in which Ælle's pedigree has been erased, began to carry through the extension beyond Woden. In the Abingdon version (B, C) there are no names beyond Woden at 560.

[2] Æthelweard, whose version of the Chronicle differed from the extant texts in some points, says under this year that Ida's family derived from Woden, with no mention of Geat.

[3] MS. *Friþuwald Freawining*, *Frealaf Friþuwulfing*, where the scribe has caught up *Freawining* from the descendants of Woden. MS. Otho B xi repeated the error.

[4] See above, p. 290 n. 2.

[5] Except the *Historia Brittonum*, where Finn son of Folcwald regularizes the last line.

with single alliteration in the first half and double in the second. This reverses alliterative practice; and if this part of the pedigree was ever cast into alliterative verse, *Godwulf Geating* must be a first half-line, with something about Geat in the second half.[1]

(iv) *Asser*, in this part of the pedigree, agrees with the Parker list against manuscripts B, C, D of the Chronicle: 'UUoden, qui fuit Frithowald, qui fuit Frealaf, qui fuit Frithuwulf, qui fuit Finn, ⟨qui fuit⟩ Godwulf, qui fuit Geata, *quem Getam iamdudum pagani pro deo venerabantur*.' (Then he quotes ineptly some lines from Sedulius which refer to the slave Geta in Terentian comedy.)[2] Asser finished his work in 893, but does not use the Chronicle after 887; in the historical part of Æthelwulf's pedigree the manuscript (*c.* 1000) preserved one form *Coenred* which is older than *Cenred* of the Parker and other Chronicles though it was probably in their archetype; in Cerdic's pedigree as far as Woden, he has the earlier short form, where all the Chronicle manuscripts have the verse form developed from it (above, pp. 301 ff.). So in this place Asser's agreement with the Parker list (and Æthelweard also agrees) should settle the reading of the archetype of the Chronicle of 892, against the consensus of the Abingdon (B, C) and Northern (D) versions, which are thus shown to have some special relation here.

Asser's *Geata* for *Geat* has been explained by W. H. Stevenson[3] as due to influence of the Latin name *Geta*. Few scholars have been more familiar with the *Historia Brittonum*, but by some chance he overlooked *Geata*[4] in that text (above, p. 309 n.), which

[1] See below, p. 314.

[2] See Stevenson's note in his edition, pp. 162 f.

[3] In his edition, pp. 160 f.: rather, the form *Geata* suggested the false connexion with *Geta*. Asser's use of the *Historia* elsewhere is noticed at p. 186.

[4] *Geata* admits of a special explanation. In an Old English genealogy, the remotest name appears as a patronymic, e.g. *Geating*, not as an independent name; and *Geating* might be formed from *Geat* or *Geata*. Without a tradition to guide him, the compiler of the *Historia* might decide for *Geata*. The same consideration applies to *Sceaf*, an end-name in the West Saxon genealogy, which has been connected by Olrik with *Sceafa*, the name of the Langobard king in *Widsith* 32. Whether or not that identification is accepted, the difference between *Sceafa* and *Sceaf* is no objection; for the latter form is first recorded (as *Scef*) in Æthelweard, who wrote after 975, and may have derived it from *Sce(a)fing*. Similarly from an epic phrase like *Finn Folcwalding* (*Widsith* 27), either *Folcwald* or *Folcwalda* can be deduced. The first appears in the *Historia Brittonum* and is normal: there are many names in *-wald*, including *Folcwald*, in Bede and the Durham *Liber Vitae*, but no example of *-walda*. Here *Beowulf* 1089 *Folcwaldan sunu* is exceptional, and the weak form may be

is an obvious source for Asser's note that *Geata* was worshipped as a god. *Geat* is probably the name of a god (perhaps the tribal god of the Geats) whose cult was absorbed by Woden, for the equivalent *Gautr* is found in Norse as a name of Odin among the gods.[1] And as this section of the *Historia* derives from English tradition, it adds something to the possibility that there was a verse form of the genealogy in which *Godwulf Geating* was followed by a half-line containing the word *god*.

(5) *Beyond Geat.* We have seen that the tradition of the genealogy from Woden to Geat is compact, though in detail it was not fixed when Asser's *Life* and the Chronicle were written about 892. The names are held to the F and G alliteration, and no early witness to the text adds or omits or varies more than one name. Evidently the series was soon closed against considerable additions, and then anybody who wished to find a place in the royal genealogy for dimly remembered kings, heroes, or gods must add them behind Geat.

The extension beyond Geat cannot be traced behind the pedigree of Æthelwulf as it appeared in Asser and in the Chronicle circulated about 892; and the following later documents are necessary for the examination of this part.[2]

(α) Æthelweard's Chronicle, written in Latin in the last quarter of the tenth century, and preserved in one manuscript[3] of which only fragments survive since the Cotton fire of 1731. It is mainly a translation from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,[4] and the pedigree of Æthelwulf is given under the year 857.

(β) William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum*, written in its first form about 1125. He gives the pedigree of Æthelwulf at the regular place (855), referring to *Anglorum chronica*.[5]

(γ) *Beowulf*, the poem preserved in MS. Vitellius A xv (*c.* 1000),

a late development rather than the survival of an old formation. On the history of *-wald, -walda* see Förstemann *Altdeutsches Namenbuch* s.v.

[1] *Grímnis-mál* in *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* i, p. 76; cf. p. 357.

[2] I disregard late transfers to the royal pedigrees of other English kingdoms; and also the pedigrees recorded in Scandinavia, which are literary derivatives from the recension of Edgar's time mentioned above, p. 290 n. 2.

[3] Enough fragments of MS. Otho A x remain to show that it was written early in the eleventh century in a smooth round English form of Caroline minuscule. The text in H. Petrie's *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, 1848, follows Savile's print of 1596.

[4] See Stenton in *Essays in Medieval History presented to T. F. Tout*, 1925, pp. 19 ff. for Æthelweard's sources.

[5] Ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series), 1887, i, pp. 120 f.

and generally of much earlier composition; how much earlier in the relevant lines (3–57) is hard to say, because the passage is in parts confused and suspect.

The following table makes comparison easier:

Chronicle B, C	*Asser*	*Æthelweard*	*Beowulf*	*William of Malmesbury*
Sceaf(ing)[1]	Seth	Scef[3]	Scef(ing)	Strephius
Bedwig	Beduuig			Bedwegius
Hwala	Huala			Gwala
Haðra	Hathra			Hadra
Itermon	Itermod			Stermonius
Heremod	Heremod			Heremodius
				Sceaf[5]
Scyldwa	Sceldwea	Scyld	Scyld[4]	Sceldius
Beaw	Beauu	Beo	Beowulf (Dane)	Beowius
Tætwa	Caetuua	Tetuua	Healfdene	Tetius
Geat(a)	Geata[2]	Geat	Hrothgar, &c.	Getius

[1] CHRONICLE—Bedwig Sceafing id est filius Noe se wæs geboren on þære Earce Noes; so that it has been questioned whether Bedwig was the person supposed to have been born in the Ark.

[2] ASSER—quem Getam iamdudum pagani pro deo uenerabantur.

[3] ÆTHELWEARD—Ipse Scef cum uno dromone aduectus est in insula oceani quæ dicitur Scani, armis circundatus, eratque ualde recens puer, et ab incolis illius terræ ignotus; attamen ab eis suscipitur, et ut familiarem diligenti animo eum custodierunt, et post in regem eligunt; de cuius prosapia ordinem trahit Athulf rex.

[4] BEOWULF—'Scyld Scefing . . . after he was first found helpless' grew up to conquer the neighbouring peoples (3 ff.) . . . For his funeral ship 'they provided him with no less rich treasures than did those who in the beginning sent him out, a child alone, across the sea' (43 ff. *Maþmas* 'treasures' includes rich arms).

[5] WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY—Iste, ut ferunt, in quandam insulam Germaniæ Scandzam, de qua Iordanes historiographus Gothorum loquitur, appulsus, navi sine remige, puerulus, posito ad caput frumenti manipulo, dormiens, ideoque Sceaf nuncupatus, ab hominibus regionis illius pro miraculo exceptus, et sedulo nutritus: adulta ætate regnavit in oppido quod tunc Slaswic, nunc vero Haithebi appellatur. Est autem regio illa Anglia Vetus dicta, unde Angli venerunt in Britanniam, inter Saxones et Gothos constituta.

(i) *The Chronicle* list is taken from the Abingdon version (B, C) in the spelling of B (*c.* 1000). The Northern version (D) practically agrees, but has several careless spellings, particularly *Beowung Beowi* for *Bedwi(g)ing Bedwi(g)*.[1] The Parker MS. agrees up

[1] E. Björkman's suggestion, *Beiblatt zur Anglia* xxx (1919), pp. 23 f., that the Northern version of the Chronicle (D, *c.* 1050) preserves the original reading in *Beowung, Beowi*, does not deserve the favourable consideration it has had.

to Itermon, but goes on: *Hraþraing* [*sic*] *se wæs geboren in þære Earce*, so that the scribe has dropped several names that were certainly in the archetype.[1] This is proof, if proof were needed, that even at Winchester a scribe contemporary with Alfred could not be trusted to treat the royal genealogy with respectful care; and nobody bothered to correct him: MS. Otho B xi has the same mistakes. Of the names, *Tætwa*, *Itermon*, *Haþra*, *Bedwig* are otherwise unknown; and *Hwala* occurs only once elsewhere in Old English, in *Widsith* 14, where he appears as the best of rulers, alongside Alexander. *Heremod* is a not uncommon name in England, and a famous Heremod appears in *Beowulf* 901, 1709, and in the older Edda, *Hyndloljóþ* 7. Note that *Sceldwea* is separated from *Sceaf(a)* by the five names Heremod, Itermon, Haþra, Hwala, Bedwig.

(ii) *Asser* here adds nothing to the Chronicle, but confirms it. *Caetuua* and *Itermod* (influenced by *Heremod?*) seem to be scribal errors; and it is unlikely that Asser himself is responsible for a second Seth, son of Noah. Iafeth was usually regarded as the ancestor of the European peoples,[2] and the possibility that the last four letters of his name have something to do with the error *Seth* cannot be excluded; but a careless scribe may have substituted *Seth* for *Sceaf*.[3]

For (i) the likeness of *d* and *o* in some Anglo-Saxon scripts would equally account for *Beow-* as a misreading of *Bedw-*. (ii) *Beowung*, *Beowi* are impossible English forms from *Beow*, but *Bedwing*, *Bedwi* are late forms from *Bedwig*. (iii) *Beowi*, in an Old English text going back to Alfred's time, cannot be explained from Latin *Beowius*; and there is no other evidence for that form before William of Malmesbury (who ends all the names in this part of the genealogy either in *-ius* or *-a*), or for the existence of a Latin source here. (iv) On the contrary, D here is closely related to the more careful MSS. B, C, which have *Bedwiging*, *Bedwig*. (v) They are confirmed by *Bedwig* in Asser, who has been shown to be a good authority for this genealogy; and all post-Conquest chroniclers, like Florence of Worcester, have forms of *Bedwig*. (vi) No explanation has been given either for the duplication of *Beow*, or for the order *Beow-Sceaf* which results. So the suggestion fails in every test.

[1] The spelling of this early MS. is: Geat Tætwaing, Tætwa Beawing, Beaw Sceldwaing, Sceldwea Heremoding, Heremod Itermoning, Itermon Hraþraing. Note that the strange form *Sceldwea* is established for the archetype by the agreement of this MS. with B (*Sceldweaing*) and Asser; and the artificial formations *Tætwaing*, *Sceldwaing*, are paralleled by *Cupaing* for *Cuþing* in the Parker MS. of this genealogy, and at the years 597, 685, and 731. There is no need to ascribe these forms to a Latin source.

[2] See *Historia Brittonum*, ch. 17 and Mommsen's references to sources.

[3] The identification was made by Florence of Worcester († 1118) or an early reader of his chronicle. The good twelfth-century MS. CCC. Oxford 157, p. 47 reads *Seth saxonice Sceaf*. Florence there gives a table starting from Adam, in which Seth appears as a fourth son of Noah; his descendants are copied from Asser; and collation with the Chronicle showed the equivalence of Seth and Sceaf. At the beginning of another good twelfth-century MS. of his work, CCCC. 92, *Sceaf* stands beside the sons of Noah; but the last four letters are by a later hand on an erasure, so that the MS. originally read *Seth*: see below, p. 319 n.

(iii) *Æthelweard* was descended from King Æthelred, Æthelwulf's son and Alfred's elder brother, and was the first noble of his time. His Preface is evidence enough that he took a special interest in the family tree, so that he is a good witness. In the pedigree of Æthelwulf, which appears at its usual place (857), he agrees with the Parker MS., against manuscripts B, C, D, and Asser, in omitting Creoda;[1] with the Chronicle manuscripts, but against Asser, he has the longer alliterative pedigree from Cerdic to Woden; and, agreeing with Asser and the Parker MS. against B, C, D, he has the fullest form of the series from Woden to Geat.[2] It is significant that he breaks away from all these texts by omitting the five names Heremod, Itermon, Hathra, Hwala, Bedwig; and so brings together Scyld and Scef to agree with *Scyld Scefing* in *Beowulf*.[3] But he is not dependent on *Beowulf*. He has *Beo*, with Asser and the Chronicle, as the son of Scyld, not the erroneous *Beowulf*[4] of the poem; Scyld's grandson is Tetuua, not Healfdene; Scef, not Scyld, is the unknown child who drifts ashore in a ship laden with precious weapons. In *Beowulf* Scyld's sea-funeral catches the poet's imagination, and his arrival as a helpless child is mentioned incidentally; but Æthelweard tells of Scef's miraculous arrival, with no mention of a funeral ship. His text points to a pedigree of Æthelwulf, possibly contained in the copy of the Chronicle used by Æthelweard but more likely to be preserved in a family tradition, from which the five names from Heremod to Bedwig were absent.[5] The natural

[1] See above, p. 299. He also omits *Cutha* = *Cuthwulf* before *Cuthwine*, which is a natural slip, since *Cutha* is a short form for both the compound names.

[2] Above, p. 312.

[3] There is no chance of accidental omission, because he numbers Cerdic's ancestors, e.g. *nonus UUothen, nonus decimus Scef*. The agreement of Æthelweard and *Beowulf* in the spellings *Scyld*, *Scef* is not significant, for both MSS. are of the same age and these are the normal late West Saxon forms.

[4] Miswritten for *Beo(w)*, because some scribe confused the name with that of Beowulf the son of Ecgtheow, who is the hero of the poem. See Appendix B.

[5] Stenton in *Essays presented to T. F. Tout*, 1925, p. 23 n. suggests that Æthelweard's form of the pedigree is due to the lost version of the Chronicle which he used. But a different view does not conflict with his main argument. This is the special case of Æthelweard's own pedigree; there was a conflict of tradition; and he might decide against the authority of the Chronicle he was using. Up to Scyld this Chronicle seems to have had that most developed

explanation is that these five names represent a late accretion to the non-Biblical names in Æthelwulf's pedigree, which those who connected Scyld and Sceaf could not accept.

The four names that Æthelweard has in common with the Chronicle and Asser are all unusual among Old English personal names, and are remarkable because two, *Sceld-* and *Beaw*,[1] have non-West Saxon stem-vowels in the early witnesses; two, *Sceldwea* and *Tætwa*,[2] show suffixes that have not been satisfactorily explained; and three, *Sceaf*, *Sceld*, *Beow*, correspond with common words meaning 'sheaf', 'shield', and 'barley', which has suggested a mythological interpretation. These names are further discussed in Appendix B.

The five names omitted by Æthelweard—Heremod, Itermon, Haþra, Hwala, Bedwig—seem to be a heterogeneous group; for it is improbable that any ancient tradition made Heremod father of Scyld, or Itermon (if the name is authentic) father of Heremod,[3] or Hwala father of Haþra, or Sceaf father of Bedwig. But in *Beowulf* it is implied that Heremod had been king of the Scyldings (Danes) before Scyld. Somebody for whom this tradition was strong, and who felt that Sceaf must be the remotest of all the Germanic names, would be tempted to find a place for the legendary figure of Heremod by breaking the combination *Scyld Sceafing*. That would open the way for the interpolation of other unrelated names, especially those with H-alliteration.

(iv) *William of Malmesbury*: Here *Sceaf* and the note on him are obviously interpolated, for *Sceaf* alone among the names is not latinized, and the corruption *Strephius* (of which Stubbs reports a variant *Screfius* from the second recension) stands where we should expect *Scefius*, as the remotest non-Biblical name. If this interpolation is removed, there remains a pedigree

form of the pedigree which appears in the Parker MS., and for the part beyond Scyld it is unlikely that the names in Asser and all extant copies of the Chronicle were unknown to Æthelweard and his correspondents.

[1] The Chronicle MSS. C and D have *Beaw* with B and Asser; Æthelweard has the correct nominative *Beo*. *Beowa* occurs in *Beowan hammes hecgan* in the Wiltshire charter of 931 which also names *grendles mere*, but the identification of this name with *Beaw*, *Beo* involves more than one doubtful assumption.

[2] *Tætwa* might be the short form of a compound like *Tætwulf*, but that explanation will hardly serve for *Sceldwea*; if a compound *Sceldwulf* (ON. *Skeldulfr*) were assumed, the equivalence with *Scyld* would fail. See below, pp. 341 f.

[3] Some scholars take *Ecgwela* in *Beowulf* 1710 to be Heremod's father. The three *Ecg-* names in the poem, *Ecgtheow* father of Beowulf, *Ecglaf* father of Unferth, and *Ecgwela*, all seem to be inventions for the purposes of the Beowulf stories.

which agrees generally with the Chronicle, though not exactly with any one manuscript.[1]

The disputed question is whether William's note on Sceaf has independent authority. He was widely read, romantically inclined, and had a tendency to blend and vary sources, which is one of his claims to be an historian rather than a chronicler. As Stubbs says:

> Our author, even when following most closely the material details which he found in the books that he was using, does so for the most part in his own language. . . . His own mastery of Latin . . . tempted him continually to paraphrase, or modify in other ways, the language of his authority, and that to such a degree as occasionally to suggest that he had still more recondite materials before him.[2]

Now Æthelweard's Chronicle is one of the authorities that William mentions in his preface to the *Gesta Regum*, and it is the probable source for the addition of Sceaf at this point in the Chronicle genealogy. To infer that a distant ancestor of the English kings ruled in Anglia Vetus was natural, and the precise names *Slaswic* and *Haithebi* are derived from another place in Æthelweard's Chronicle,[3] which is good evidence that William had it before him. Again, the meaning of the common noun *sceaf* was familiar to any Englishman of the early twelfth century: the proper name is glossed *garba* in some late chroniclers.[4]

[1] Thus it has the remotest names *Hwala*, *Bedwig*, *Scef* which the scribe of the Parker MS. omitted. In the Woden-Geat series it has *Fridewâldus* with the Parker MS. and Asser, but omits *Frithuwulf* with Chronicles B, C, D. In the historical part, against B, C, D, and Asser, it omits *Creoda* with the Parker MS. and in accordance with William's own narrative; but *Chinricus Creodingii*, *Creodingius Cherdicii* is interlined in the first version (Stubbs's note ad loc.).

[2] *Gesta Regum* ii, Preface, p. xvi.

[3] Ed. Petrie, p. 502: 'Porro Anglia Vetus sita est inter Saxones et Giotos, habens oppidum capitale quod sermone Saxonico *Sleswic* nuncupatur, secundum vero Danos *Haithaby*.'

[4] In CCCC 92, a good twelfth-century MS. of Florence of Worcester, a thirteenth-century reader has altered *Seth* to *Schef* (see above, p. 317 n.), added *i. garba* above it, and provided a footnote which develops the legend: 'On the testimony of old chronographers, a ship without oars (*sine remige*) drove ashore *in Saxonia*. The people of the country, coming to see what it contained, found a little boy, crying with no one to comfort him (*quendam puerulum vagientem, omni penitus solatio destitutum humano*). A sheaf had been placed under his head. The Saxons brought him up, and called him *Schef*, *i. garba*, *a manipulo videlicet capite suo supposito*. This Schef, reared among the Saxons, begot Beadwy.' It is William of Malmesbury re-vamped. Matthew Paris in his *Chronica Majora* (*c.* 1250), ed. Luard, Rolls Series, i, p. 444, is content to copy William of Malmesbury, adding after *manipulo* 'quem patria lingua *seaf* dicimus, Gallica vero *garbam*'.

So a writer of William's intelligence and classical training[1] might, as Olrik and others have suggested, give an etymological turn to the story by transmuting Æthelweard's phrases *ualde recens puer*, *armis circundatus* into *puerulus*, *posito sub caput frumenti manipulo*, *dormiens*. The alternative view requires more than the assumption that an ancient tradition explaining Sceaf's name survived into the twelfth century. If William gave his mind to the difference at all, why should he prefer this tradition to the clear and good authority of Æthelweard when it would have been easy to combine the two? And why did Æthelweard, who was dealing with his own pedigree, who went out of his way to give a tradition about Sceaf, and knew the common meaning of *sceaf*, make no reference to the explanatory story of a sheaf of corn if it were current in his time? On these considerations it is unsafe to treat William of Malmesbury as an authority for this genealogy independent of the Chronicle and Æthelweard.

(6) *Biblical Names*: The Biblical names show the artificial character of this lengthened pedigree and the crudeness of the connexions that passed muster. Otherwise they need not detain us. William of Malmesbury has noted their source in Luke iii. 36–38, and the dependence need not be direct. There are earlier instances of pedigrees being traced back to Adam through this series of names, e.g. Nennius chs. 17 and 18;[2] and the ultimate source, Genesis v, is a commonplace of Biblical and universal chronologies. Æthelweard does not mention the Biblical names, but it cannot be deduced from his silence that they were absent from his copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. He may have preferred family tradition to a written Chronicle for the part beyond Geat. Besides, he was a great patron of the revival of religion and learning that marked the second half of the tenth century, and scholarly friends like Ælfric would not encourage belief in the fabulous birth in the Ark of an ancestor Sceaf.[3]

[1] He was one of the best classical scholars of his times (see M. R. James *Two Ancient English Scholars*, 1931) and in this passage *sine remige* seems to be a reminiscence of a famous line in Virgil *Aeneid* iv. 588.

[2] Later Irish pedigrees are traced to Adam, usually through Mil of Spain. The late Scandinavian genealogies also go back to Adam through Saturn, Jupiter, Priam, &c. See too Plummer's notes to the Chronicle ii, pp. 81 f.

[3] The best authorities agree in identifying Æthelweard the chronicler with Ælfric's patron Alderman Æthelweard. But there are difficulties. (i) That an Anglo-Saxon layman should write a long work in Latin is extraordinary. (ii) The Latin style of Æthelweard's Chronicle is so artificial as to be sometimes unintelligible, but the Latin of Æthelwold and Ælfric is plain and practical. This might be explained if Æthelweard wrote his Chronicle before he came under the influence of the reforming school. Yet according to Ælfric (English Preface to his *Grammar*) even among the English clergy Latin was at a very low ebb before the Benedictine Reform. The later Æthelweard's work is dated (see E. E. Barker in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* xxiv (1951), esp. p. 56) the shorter is the period in which he could have been uninfluenced by the new school. (iii) Ælfric's patron pressed him to translate the first part of Genesis, explaining that another man had translated the rest for him; yet the Vulgate Genesis would be simple to anybody who could write or read Æthelweard's Chronicle. (iv) So far from suggesting that his patron could read Latin for himself and was vain of his Latinity, Ælfric, who was a tactful man, implies the contrary. The English Preface to his *Lives of Saints* is addressed to Æthelweard and Æthelmær, whereas the Latin Preface refers to them in the third person; and the English Preface runs: 'thou, beloved, above all, and Æthelmær have asked me for such writings and received them from my hands, *to strengthen your faith with narratives which hitherto you had not in your own language*'. (v) Æthelweard's Chronicle shows verbal misunderstandings of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* annals, e.g. for 658, 710, 755, which are hardly possible for a literate Englishman.

If the identification of the two Æthelweards holds good, the explanation of these difficulties may be that a Celtic-trained secretary was employed to turn Æthelweard's material into Latin, so that it could be sent abroad to his distant kinswoman Matilda, daughter of Otto the Great, who is addressed at the beginning of each of the four books. That an eminent layman should employ a Latin secretary for this purpose seems natural enough.

To sum up. Analysis of the pedigree of Æthelwulf has shown it to be a late and artificial composition, developed by well-marked stages in such a way that, as a rule, the remotest names represent the latest accretions. Thus:

1. Æthelwulf–Ecgberht–Ealhmund–Eafa–Eoppa–Ingild;
2. (Ine)–Cenred–Ceolwald–Cuthwulf–Cuthwine–Ceawlin–Cynric–Creoda–Cerdic;
3*a*. (Cerdic)–Elesa–Giwis–Brond–Bældæg–Woden;
3*b*. (Cerdic)–Elesa–Esla–Giwis–Wig–Freawine–Frithogar–Brond–Bældæg–Woden;
4. (Woden) – Frithuwald – Frealaf – Frithuwulf – Finn – Godwulf–Geat (with variations);
5*a*. (Geat)–Tætwa–Beaw–Sceldwea–Sceaf;
5*b*. (Geat)–Tætwa–Beaw–Sceldwea–Heremod–Itermon–Hathra–Hwala–Bedwig–Sceaf;
6. (Sceaf)–Noe–Lamech &c.–Adam.

The alternative 3*b* may have been added later than 4, and 5*b* later than 6.

It may be asked: where in this pedigree does fact end and fiction begin? There is no certain answer. From Ecgberht to Ingild, Ine's brother, it may reasonably be trusted in the

absence both of conflicting and corroborative evidence. From Ingild to Cerdic it is defensible, but there is conflicting evidence in the Chronicle on the immediate successors of Cerdic, and it is unlikely that the facts of the early period can be represented by orderly lines of hereditary succession. Beyond Cerdic all is fiction or error, and if the names themselves are old, they were not attached to the ancestry of the West Saxon kings by old tradition.

III

General Survey

The general development of Anglo-Saxon genealogies has been touched on so often in the analysis of Æthelwulf's pedigree that it will be convenient to continue with that subject, leaving the minor genealogies in the Chronicle to be dealt with in Appendix A.

Tacitus's account of Germanic custom: 'reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt',[1] seems to be a fair generalization, if the meaning of 'king' is not pressed too closely. It implies that, in times when there was only oral tradition, the ancestry of noble families was remembered. But since strict rules of hereditary succession were not the sole basis of choice, it does not imply the memorizing of very long pedigrees. To go beyond great-grandfathers, which is the normal limit of chronology in oral tradition, would seldom be necessary.

In the remains of heroic poetry, where the habits of the period before writing are most likely to be reflected, there is no evidence for long pedigrees. In *Beowulf* the ancestry of King Hrothgar is short and mainly fictitious: Healfdene–Beowulf Scylding–Scyld Scefing. We are told that King Hygelac was the son of King Hrethel, and was related, perhaps as nephew or grandson, to Swerting. The father of a hero is usually named: Sigemund is the son of Wæls (*Beow.* 897); Waldhere in the fragments of that story is the son of Ælfhere. When Beowulf son of Ecgtheow arrives unexpectedly at Heorot, Hrothgar at once recalls his father and mother;[2] and though there were special reasons in

[1] *Germania*, ch. vii.

[2] We are told also that Beowulf was of the kin of the Wægmundings (2814). Note that the names of Beowulf, Sigemund, and Waldhere, like Hengest's (above, p. 288), do not alliterate with the names given to their fathers. Others alliterate, e.g. Widia son of Weland in *Waldere*, Hagan son of Hagathien in the Latin *Waltharius*, Sigurd or Siegfried son of Sigemund in *Volsunga Saga* and *Nibelungenlied*; but nothing suggests that the latter combinations are the more primitive.

this case, great men of the Heroic period took pride in their memory for relationships. '*Chud ist mir al irmindeot*'—'I know everybody', says Hildebrand in *Hildebrandslied* 13 when he asks Hadubrand to name his father and kin. He means everybody of note, and a man is seldom mentioned in *Beowulf* without the name of his father or some distinguished kinsman. Still, the purpose seems to be the practical one of identifying him or establishing his own worth. Reflected glory from very remote ancestors is nowhere claimed. There is no evidence in Germanic or early Anglo-Saxon times that genealogies were recited on formal visits or at funerals; or used to fix the order of remote events.

Written pedigrees of Germanic kings first appear among the tribes that moved south-east into close contact with the Roman Empire. In the *Lex Burgundionum* which is assigned to the early sixth century, four ancestors or predecessors of King Gundobad are named,[1] and three of them, Gifica, Gislhere, and Guthhere, are mentioned in English heroic poetry, though the references in *Widsith* 19, 65 ff., 123 do not suggest a close relationship between them. In the seventh-century *Origo Gentis Langobardorum* the pedigree of King Rotharius is given to ten generations.[2] Free from the possibility of tampering between the original and the extant manuscripts is the Gothic pedigree of seventeen generations which Jordanes[3] copied from Cassiodorus, who wrote about the year 530: it ends with demigods (*ansis*, ON. *ésir*, OE. *ēsa* gen. pl.), so that invention was already at work to lengthen the lines. None of these East-Germanic royal pedigrees goes back to Woden.

Bede was the first to record some English royal pedigrees,[4] and in the parts before written records they are short. He notes that many kings or sub-kings traced their descent from Woden, but the one example he preserves has no claims to credibility: only three names come between Hengest, who flourished in the middle of the fifth century, and Woden, a spirit who was worshipped as a great god in the first century A.D.

There is evidence for the existence, some two generations after Bede's *History* (731), of a systematic collection of royal genealogies, witnessed by the 'Vespasian group' of manuscripts, by Nennius and the Chronicle.[5] For these lists we are fortunate in having the early MS. Vespasian B vi, which can be localized in

[1] *Mon. Germ. Hist. Leges* i (1892), ii. 1, p. 43.

[2] Op. cit. *SS. Rerum Langobardicarum* (1878), p. 6.

[3] Op. cit. *Auct. Ant.* v i (1882), p. 76 and footnote.

[4] Above, p. 288.

[5] Above, pp. 288–98.

Mercia (Lichfield) and closely dated to the year 812. Whereas Nennius and the Chronicle end the pedigrees with Woden, Vespasian B VI shows that by 812 they had been taken a step farther back to Frealaf, of whom nothing is known. By this date too, the kings of Lindsey had been traced still farther back to Geat;[1] and though Nennius has not the Lindsey pedigree, in another context he carries Hengest's line beyond Woden to Geat. Evidently this last development is later than Bede.

The genealogies of the Vespasian collection cannot be analysed by the methods used for the more elaborate pedigree of Æthelwulf. All the copies seem to belong to a single tradition, and most of the lists present an impenetrable front. Fortunately there are enough of them to give opportunities for comparison; and some light can be thrown on their transmission, credibility, and historical setting.

For the transmission it is instructive to compare Bede's text of the early part of the Kentish pedigree, which is free from any suspicion of later corruption, with the lists in Vespasian B VI and in Nennius:

Bede	*Vespasian*	*Historia*
i. 15 and ii. 5	*B VI*	*Brittonum*
Uoden	Uoden	UUoden
Uecta	Uegdaeg	Guectha
Uitta	Uihtgils	Guigta
Uictgils	Uitta	Guictgils
Hengist	Hengest	Hengest
Oeric *or* Oisc	Ocga	Ossa
Octa	Oese	Octha
Irminric	Iurmenric	Eormoric

The alternative *Oeric* might be expected to disappear, but it is surprising that *Oisc*, from which *Oiscingas* the family name of early kings of Kent derived, and which should have later forms *Oese*, *Esc*, appears in the Vespasian group as *Oese*, by common scribal confusion of *c* and *e*; in Nennius as *Ossa*, with the doubling of intervocalic *s* which is a feature of Insular spelling; and

[1] Above, p. 308. In a letter written before 725 (*Mon. Germ. Hist. Epist.* iii (1892), pp. 271 f.), Bishop Daniel of Winchester advises Boniface how to confute the heathens from their own *falsorum deorum genealogia*. This implies no more than the practice of making the gods a family of fathers and sons, sisters and brothers, which is usual when they are given human attributes. It is not evidence for a long pedigree of the gods in heathen Germany of the early eighth century.

as *Æsc* in the Chronicle narrative.[1] Then again *Uegdæg* in the Vespasian group is not philologically equivalent to Bede's *Uecta*, Nennius's *Guechta*, and appears to be a late assimilation to *Uegdæg*, the son of Woden from whom the Deiran kings traced their descent: it is against the practice of these genealogies that the kings of Kent and Deira should be content to share a fictitious link with Woden.

The *Historia Brittonum* has neither the misreading *Ocga* for *Octa*, which may be due to the likeness of *t* and *g* in many Insular hands, nor the two inversions *Uihtgils : Uitta* and *Ocga : Oese* which distinguish the Vespasian group from Bede.[2] The one case where Bede provides a check may be exceptional; yet in a list of eight early names, it is disquieting to find that the Vespasian group, our chief authority for the genealogies, has two misreadings *Oese* and *Ocga*, one substituted form *Uegdaeg*, and two inversions of the order.

We have seen (above, p. 316) how carelessly the pedigree of the West Saxon royal family was copied at Winchester about the end of the ninth century; and clearly not all the genealogies copied at Lichfield a century earlier had been preserved with ritual precision by oral or by written tradition. Examples of the scribal corruption they suffered in comparatively late manuscripts have been noted incidentally; and to establish that transmission was careless throughout Anglo-Saxon times it will be enough to add a curious instance from MS. CCCC 183, which King Athelstan presented to St. Cuthbert's shrine. In it a Bernician branch runs:

Leodwald	Eadhelming
Ecgwald	Ocgting
Eadhelm	Iding
Ocg	Eating

because the scribe copied the column of patronymics separately,

[1] *Oesa* Vesp.: *Ossa* Nennius: *Esa* Chronicle appears in the pedigree of Ida of Bernicia. On *Æsc* see below, p. 338. For suggested etymologies of *Oisc* and *Oeric*, none of them convincing, see H. Ström *Old English Personal Names in Bede's History*, Lund 1939, pp. 73 f. The Ravenna Geographer, writing in the seventh century, gives the name of the leader of the Saxon invaders as MS. *Ansehis*, which editors correct to *Anschis* (v. 31). Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, p. 47 equates *Anschis* with *Oisc*, and notes that a slight variation would make MS. *Ansehis* correspond to *Oese*. Müllenhoff *Beowulf*, p. 61 n. suggests, with more probability, that *Anschis* comes through a Greek source which had 'αγχις = *Hangis(t)* = *Hengist*.

[2] Whether Nennius used Bede is disputed. Here he or his immediate source may have corrected the Vespasian text by reference to Bede; but he may have used it in an earlier, less corrupted form: see above, p. 293. In the

omitting *Ecgwealding* which should stand opposite *Leodwald*, and so gives grandfathers, not fathers, in the second column for this and the following branch.

Turning from the transmission to the substance of the genealogies, we are at once faced with a doubt. All the kingdoms for which genealogies are preserved—Deira, Bernicia, Mercia, East Anglia, Lindsey, Kent, Wessex, Essex—have lines going back to Woden (or Seaxnet). Were they all established by *reges ex nobilitate* whose remoter ancestors were kept in memory? In that case, the genealogies provide remarkable evidence of order, continuity, and respect for hereditary right in the period of migration and conquest. Or were some of the founders of kingdoms *duces ex virtute*, war-leaders and adventurers who won power in confused and violent times, and later acquired the pedigrees which no king need lack? There is information, legendary of course, about only two of the reputed first conquerors of kingdoms in England. Hengest of Kent, who is presumably the same as Hengest in the Finn legend,[1] was certainly a war-leader: the one story describes him as an adventurer or exile, the other makes him King Hnæf's principal retainer. His pedigree is a crude fiction that might have been produced at any time before it appears in Bede. Cerdic, the founder of the West Saxon kingdom, is called *ealdorman* in the Chronicle, which is precisely *dux*, not *rex*; and his pedigree seems to be the result of an error.[2] It may well be that some of the other founders of English kingdoms were not kings by heredity, and that the earlier parts of their pedigrees are fictions of the seventh and eighth centuries.

Doubt is confirmed by a curious feature of all these genealogies. They are represented by trunk lines to which branch lines are joined when necessary.[3] Four of the pedigrees, viz. the Deiran, Bernician, Mercian, and Kentish, are in all manuscripts of the Vespasian group, in the *Historia Brittonum*, and (except part of the Kentish) in the Chronicle, so that they belong to the nucleus of the collection. The trunk pedigrees for these kingdoms end with

narrative of the *Historia Brittonum*, ch. 38 *Octha* is given as the name of Hengest's son; and Æthelweard at the year 596 makes *Ochta* and *Ese* names of the same son.

[1] Finn in the genealogies, if he is the same as Finn Folcwalding of Finnsburh (above, p. 309 n.), is Woden's grandfather, while Hengest is Woden's great-great-grandson. But to argue from this that two different Finns are intended is to treat the prehistoric parts of the genealogies as true records or consistent fictions.

[2] Above, pp. 302 ff.

[3] Above, pp. 292 f.

kings who reigned at dates varying from the first half of the seventh to the second half of the eighth century, and to the name of the latest king in each trunk line I add a rough date for the end of his reign. Then from Edwin (632) to Woden, inclusive, there are 14 names in the Deiran line; from Ecgfrith (685) there are 15 names in the Bernician;[1] from Æthelred (704) 14 names in the Mercian; and from Æthelberht (616) 14 names in the Kentish. The East Anglian line may belong to the original group, since it is in the *Historia Brittonum* and the Chronicle has no occasion to use it: from Ælfwald (749) there are 14 names. The Lindsey pedigree, which seems to be a later addition to the Vespasian collection, is exceptional. Apparently it had become settled with only 11 names from Aldfrith (790) to Woden; and, as if to make up for the deficiency, it alone is carried back to Geat, making 16 names in all as compared with 15 in most other pedigrees that include Frealaf as Woden's father.

The regularity of numbers extends to the two Saxon pedigrees that supplement the Vespasian collection. From Ine (726) of Wessex to Woden there are 14 names in the CT list; and the East Saxon line in BM. Addit. 23211 tallies with 14 names from Offa (709) to Seaxnet.[2] The law of averages can produce remarkable uniformity; but here, in the extreme case, the Lindsey pedigree professes to cover a period of some 9 generations more than the Deiran; yet in only 2 out of the 8 lines is the total one more than the norm. The conclusion that there was a recognized standard length for these trunk pedigrees can hardly be avoided.

The agreement can be tested at earlier stages. Starting from three contemporaries, Æthelberht I of Kent, Ælle of Deira, and Æthelric of Bernicia, there are 9 names to Woden in the Kentish line, 13 in the Deiran, 12 in the Bernician. Starting from the first kings (not necessarily contemporary) who founded dynasties in England,[3] there are 6 names from Cerdic of Wessex to Woden in CT, 7 from Oisc of Kent, 8 from Icil of Mercia, 9 from Wuffa of East Anglia, 11 from Ida of Bernicia. So the regularity of numbers is not early. It was attained in the late eighth century; and the influence that could level out variations up to that time must have operated then.

[1] The *Historia Brittonum* and the Chronicle, which derive from a text that did not go beyond Woden to Frealaf, have both 14 names here; but they are not good evidence for that number in their archetype because they disagree in important details; see p. 302 n. 2. They show that the text of the Bernician pedigree was unstable.

[2] See above, p. 295 n. 2.

[3] See above, p. 304 n. 2.

The explanation I suggest is that the original of this collection was a late-eighth-century compilation in a tabular form which is best preserved in the earliest manuscript, Vespasian B vi, though it is there disturbed by undoubted additions in the Mercian branches.[1] The chance agreement in length of two or three important lines, such as the Kentish and the Mercian, would establish a normal length for the columns. Because any irregularity is unpleasingly conspicuous where the columns stand side by side, and perhaps because there seemed to be a certain fitness in having the same number of generations in each trunk line, others of the original collection were made to conform, more probably by choice of alternatives or expansion than by omission. Trunk pedigrees incorporated later, or recorded elsewhere in imitation of the standard collection, would be made to match them. Thus a rigid form was imposed on materials still comparatively fluid.

So although recent writers who have weighed the evidence for the Anglo-Saxon conquest have treated them with respect,[2] the Anglo-Saxon genealogies are not primitive documents. Counting their generations will not lead us back safely to Continental chiefs or kings of the fourth or fifth centuries. For it is exactly their remoter parts, the details of which had no practical importance, that would be fluid enough in the late eighth century to be moulded into standard form by a compiler of tables. I suspect particularly the long Northumbrian pedigrees of Ida and Yffi. They agree so closely together in the number of generations to Woden, and differ so much from the short pedigree of Hengest, that one would expect a master of chronology like Bede to notice them, if they existed in his time and were believed to be authentic. The possibility of Celtic influence on these long prehistoric lists cannot be excluded, for both the Irish and the Welsh

[1] The royal pedigrees of the Vespasian collection can be displayed on one page of moderate size (they occupy the lower three-quarters of the large page of Vespasian B vi); and two pedigrees of about fourteen lines each make a convenient column. How the branches for Northumbria and Mercia were arranged in the original is hard to guess; but at least the latest Mercian branch in Vespasian B vi must be reckoned an accretion. Even so the scribe has managed to end each of his three columns with *Frealaf* in a line across the foot of the page: the Lindsey addition Friodulf–Finn–Godulf–Geat projects below from the middle column. The arrangement in CCCC 183 and Tiberius B v is further disturbed by the insertion of regnal tables among the genealogies.

[2] Thus J. N. L. Myres *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, 1936, p. 403 n. approves 'the increasing tendency of scholars to treat the genealogies as archaic and primitive documents'.

seem to have kept pedigrees in early Christian times,[1] they were more fanciful than the Anglo-Saxons, and more inclined to pride themselves on very distant ancestors.

The early names of the Mercian genealogy are the best authenticated: Penda (†655)–Pypba–Crioda–Cynewald–Cnebba–Icil–Eamer–Angengeot–Offa–Uermund–Uihtlaeg–Watholgeot–Woden. Bede (ii. 20) says that Penda was of the Mercian royal stock. Felix, writing before 749, makes St. Guthlac the descendant of Icil through a line of famous kings. *Beowulf* 1960 mentions Eomer (MS. *Geomor*) as if he were a son of the Continental Offa. Offa–Wermund–Wihtlæg have the same relation as Uffo–Wermundus–Viglet in late Danish tradition, which may or may not be independent.[2] Still, the possibility cannot be excluded that legendary heroes of the tribe were absorbed into the royal line; and there are some discrepancies in the tradition. *Waga*[3] in Florence of Worcester and Nennius is an important variation, unless it is a by-form of *Watholgeot*. In *Beowulf* 1957 ff., granted that MS. *Garmund* represents Wermund, Eomer appears to be son of Offa and grandson of Wermund, not, as in the Vespasian collection, grandson of Offa and son of Angengeot (Nennius *Ongen*, Chronicle *Angelpeow*). As historical records, all the genealogies in their early parts fail because fact, fiction, and error cannot be distinguished.

Their historical development is firmer ground. It is no chance that the Vespasian collection can be traced to Mercia in the last decades of the eighth century, for then Mercian power was at its height under King Offa (757–96). To the Pope and to Charlemagne he represented England as no previous king could have done, and so became a force to be reckoned with in European diplomacy. There were still many lesser English kings, whom he controlled by conquest or by marriage alliances; and it was his policy to sustain them in their hereditary kingdoms, so long as they fell in with his purposes. Charlemagne's example may have guided his ambitions, but what is known of their relations shows

[1] I am obliged to Dr. D. A. Binchy for information about early Irish genealogies, and for a reference to T. F. O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology*, Dublin 1946. Mr. O'Rahilly thinks that an exaggerated age and authority have been attributed to the Irish documents, see esp. pp. 266 ff. and pp. 408 ff. The difficulty with them and with the Welsh genealogies is that they are recorded in late manuscripts, and the present investigation shows how dangerous it is to assume that late copies of such material accurately reproduce sources that were in existence many centuries earlier.

[2] Above, p. 306.

[3] Above, p. 293 n. 2.

that he set his royal dignity as high as Charlemagne's. No contemporary king could surpass him in the ancestors that tradition gave him among the kings of Angel. And there was besides a strong reason why he should wish to glorify hereditary kingship —his devotion to his only son, and his determination to spare no means that would secure him in the succession.[1] Nine years before his own death he had Ecgfrith crowned; and for the first time in England, as far as records show, the religious rite of anointing was used to make the ceremony more solemn and binding.[2]

These conditions favoured the assembly of the Vespasian pedigrees of ruling kings, together with lists of popes and English bishops which recall Offa's policy of playing a leading part in Church affairs; and the collection was influential in following centuries because of the usefulness of the information it contained, and the advantage in dissemination that a Mercian compilation had when Mercia's authority was widest spread. The direct record of Offa's reign is slight; and the best hope of learning more about his character and policy lies in the possibility that documents like this may be traced back to it.

Offa's hopes were disappointed. Within a few months of his own death, Ecgfrith died; the great kingdom passed to a collateral line, and another generation saw the breakdown of Mercian supremacy. Within a year of Ecgfrith's death Alcuin laments that 'hardly one remains of the old stock of kings, and the more obscure their origin, the more they lack valour'.[3] Though he had reasons for gloom in the state of Northumbria, his words are a reminder that the Church, which had the means of recording royal genealogies, favoured hereditary succession. Its interest as well as its teaching were on the side of legitimate birth, continuity, and civil peace.

With the fall of most of the hereditary kings, emulation and interest in royal genealogies was bound to decline. When Ecgberht died in 839 only the old Wessex line was strong and secure. The record of literary activity in his day is scanty. About the time of his death the expanded form of the Vespasian collection

[1] 'Nam, sicut scis optime, quam multum sanguinis effudit pater eius ut filio regnum confirmaret'; Alcuin in *Mon. Germ. Epist. Karol. Aev.* ii, p. 179; cf. p. 182 foot. See also his letter to Ecgfrith op. cit., p. 105: 'Ecce quam nobilissimus natus es parentibus, quam magna enutritus cura.'

[2] See Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 217.

[3] Op. cit., p. 192. See also the following letter (p. 193) in the same sense; cf. Stenton in *Essays on History presented to R. L. Poole*, p. 142.

which I have called CT came South,[1] where copies were made up to the twelfth century. But not till the reign of his grandson Alfred is there written evidence of pride in the history of the West Saxons. Alfred noted some information about the royal family in his lost *Handbook*; his interest may have encouraged the preservation of minor West Saxon pedigrees in the Chronicle of 892; and his prestige is reflected in the pedigree of his father Æthelwulf which surpasses all the rest in its fantastic development.

After a succession of strong kings, Edgar's reign marks a new high point in the political and cultural history of the West Saxon kingdom; and in his time the Regnal Table was brought up to date in the version beginning: 'Eadweard and Eadmund and Æðelred æðelingas syndon Eadgares suna cyninges.'[2] That is the end of the development. The decline of Ecgberht's house followed swiftly. Great enthusiasm for hereditary English kings is not to be expected in the reigns of Edward the Martyr, Æthelred 'the Unready', Cnut the Dane and his sons, or Edward the Confessor. The Conquest was still more unfavourable to interest in Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies. They are dropped from the post-Conquest Chronicles E and F; and at Christ Church, Canterbury, the writer of F erased many of them from the Parker Chronicle to make room for other matter. But under Henry I the new antiquarian school of native chroniclers—Florence of Worcester, Simeon of Durham, William of Malmesbury—collected and recorded all they could find about the Anglo-Saxon kings; and Florence or a continuator revised the Vespasian lists of kings and bishops. Later chroniclers did little more than add to the corruption of forgotten names. For the pedigrees of English kings the fantastic pedigree of Æthelwulf served as a model throughout the Middle Ages; and Kemble[3] quotes from rolls at Cambridge and Paris a curious fifteenth-century collection of the royal genealogies of various countries. There Henry VI is traced back to Adam through Gothus–Cinrincius (Cynric)–Boerinus (Beowius)–Sceldius–Sceph and other old names derived from William of Malmesbury.

[1] Above, p. 291.

[2] Above, p. 290 n. 2.

[3] Postscript to the preface of *Beowulf* ii (1837), p. vii. The names are quoted from the Trinity College, Cambridge, roll O. 5.54.

APPENDIX A

Genealogies and the Structure of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

Some questions affecting the compilation of the Chronicle are assembled here because the genealogies supply clues.

(i) Was There a Chronicle Ending at 855? Many critics agree with Plummer[1] that an earlier form of the Chronicle ended at 855, and they rely on the great pedigree of Æthelwulf entered under that year, regarding it as a final flourish. Its evidence is at best indecisive. Politically Æthelwulf's last years were clouded, so that a contemporary would scarcely choose his death (858 entered at 855) as the occasion for such a flourish. Since he was father of four succeeding kings, his pedigree might be added to honour or flatter any of them, and particularly Alfred after he had re-established the prestige of his kingdom: Æthelwulf's pedigree gave Alfred's, as well as Ecgberht's.

But did this long pedigree exist before Alfred's reign? It is first witnessed by the Chronicle of 892, and (with a significant variation) by Asser,[2] who wrote about the same time. The West Saxon Regnal Table, compiled or revised after Alfred's accession in 871, does not carry the line beyond Woden, the old end-point for most of the royal genealogies; and that is not easy to explain if the longer form had already won sufficient status to be adopted in a chronicle up to 855.

It might still be maintained that a chronicle up to 855 was produced very early in Alfred's reign. But the pedigree of Æthelwulf is joined to its annal in the same way as are the pedigrees in eighth-century annals, e.g. Offa's at 755. In the context it reads more like additional material, artlessly tacked on, than the studied close of a work ending at 855.

(ii) The Regnal Table and the Chronicle. Plummer insists that the West Saxon Regnal Table[3] was drawn up to be the Preface of a chronicle composed in Alfred's reign.[4] W. H. Stevenson says the Table was probably older than Alfred's time.[5] The question raised by this

[1] Edition ii, p. cxiii n. For discussion see R. H. Hodgkin *A History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 1935, ii, p. 707.

[2] Above, p. 301. [3] See pp. 294 ff. above.

[4] Edition ii, pp. lxxxix ff. and cvi; *Life and Times of Alfred the Great*, 1902, p. 146.

[5] *Asser*, p. 153 and note. The reasons given are not compelling. Even if the forms *Celin* and *Eaba* (above, p. 295 n. 5) were out of date in Alfred's time, a compiler might take them over from an older source. So it is with *Ceawlin* (below, pp. 337 f.). The references to Alfred's lost *Handbook* in Florence of Worcester and William of Malmesbury show that it contained genealogical information about the West Saxon royal family, but hardly point to this particular regnal table.

difference of opinion between two masters of the subject is interesting for the history of the Chronicle of 892.

One expects a preface that covers matter dealt with in the text to be based on the text or on the same sources; but the Regnal Table disagrees with the Chronicle annals in many points and is clearly based on other sources.[1] In his examination of these discrepancies Plummer distinguished 'the writer of the genealogical Preface' from 'the compilers of the Chronicle',[2] without explaining further. But the discrepancies are easier to account for if the Regnal Table was an older independent document of some official standing, which the compiler of the Chronicle adopted without critical scrutiny. Its divergences might then escape notice, as they could scarcely do if it was composed as part of the plan of the Chronicle.

There is a better reason for thinking that the Table was originally an independent document. The Fragment from Alfred's time shows the earliest state of the text: it has correctly *Ceaulin*, not *Celm*, and it omits the details of Cenred's family which are related to the Chronicle annal for 718.[3] It accompanied a martyrology, and is followed not by a chronicle but by computus matter—genealogies of the East Saxon kings and Latin verses on calendarial subjects. This is the natural context of a regnal table. Its association with the Chronicle of 892 seems to be secondary; and an independent origin might explain why only a minority of the later copies and extensions are found in manuscripts containing the Chronicle.

That the 'genealogical Preface' was in the archetype of the Chronicle of 892 follows naturally from Plummer's view. If that view is rejected the question becomes an open one. Certainly it has the function of a preface in the Parker MS. The same text appears on the leaf in BM. MS. Addit. 34652 which originally belonged to MS. Otho B xi;[4]

[1] Even in spelling it was not assimilated to the text of the Chronicle. *Ceardic*, which appears at different places in the Fragment, in MS. Kk. 3. 18, and in the Parker MS., was evidently the spelling of the Table. The text of the Chronicle (Parker, B, C, D, E) has regularly *Cer-*. *Ceard-* twice in the late MS. F from Canterbury is not significant.

[2] Edition ii, p. 1.

[3] See above, p. 296.

[4] Above, p. 295 n. 1. Plummer (ii, pp. xcix f.) satisfied himself that the Chronicle in Otho B xi was a close derivative of the Parker MS.; and had he known the origin of the leaf printed by Napier he would not have treated its text of the Regnal Table, which repeats glaring errors of the Parker MS., as an earlier stage from which corruption in the Parker Table can be explained (ii, pp. 2 f.). The Parker Table omits Ceawlin's reign altogether. After Cynric's reign the Otho B xi leaf has: 'þa he gefor þa feng Ceol[win] to þam rice 7 heol seofan gear. þa he gefor þa feng Ceol to þam rice 7 heold syx gear. þa he gefor þa feng Ceolwulf, &c.' Napier noted that [win] is added by an early modern hand. It has no authority, and the duplication of *Ceol* must be explained as an error made in copying from the defective Parker text.

but as the Chronicle in this manuscript is a derivative of the Parker text (A), it adds nothing to the evidence.

The only other manuscript of the Chronicle with which the Regnal Table is associated is Tiberius A VI (B), which has the annals up to 977, and once contained a regnal table (now in MS. Tiberius A III)[1] continued up to the accession of Edward the Martyr in 975. If this leaf immediately preceded the Chronicle it should be decisive for the archetype, since B is independent of A both in the annals and in the Table: it keeps Creoda whose name has been excluded from the Parker MS.[2] But the original position of the leaf is uncertain. Its modest opening line does not suggest the beginning of a major work. Joscelin's transcript in Bodleian MS. Laud Misc. 661 puts the Table at the end of the Chronicle. MS. C of the Chronicle, which up to 977 is closely related to B, and which continues the annals beyond that date, does not contain the Table. These facts would be conveniently explained if the Table followed the Chronicle in Tiberius A VI. If so, the Parker MS. is the only evidence that the Table served as preface to the archetype of 892. Still, prefaces that are not closely bound to their texts are likely to be dropped in late copies; and the interpolation of Cuthburg and Cwenburg is best explained by association with the Chronicle.

(iii) The Position of Pedigrees in the Chronicle. Pedigrees usually come at the ends of annals. This might be due to the compiler's plan; but longer additions to an existing framework would naturally have the end-position. Then it is worth noting the places where something follows a pedigree, viz. 676, 685, 716, 731. In every case the following matter comes from Bede's *Epitome* (*Eccl. Hist.* v. 24). This is consistent with Earle's opinion, advanced on general grounds, that the almost complete incorporation of Bede's *Epitome* was late;[3] and as the pedigrees at 685, 716, 731 are from the Vespasian group, that source appears to have been incorporated before the Epitome. In the annal for 626, where matter from the Epitome precedes Penda's pedigree from the Vespasian source, the beginning of the Penda entry seems to be defective. The usual formal statement of his accession is lacking, and it may have fallen out as a result of the insertion of a sentence from the Epitome at this point. We seem here to catch a glimpse of a draft of the Chronicle in which the patchwork of compilation was visible.

Other copies show that the sentence containing Ceawlin was differently worded: 'þa he forðferde þa feng Ceawlin to, his sunu, and heold, &c.'

[1] For the authorities, see Plummer ii, p. xc n. There is a facsimile in Thorpe *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Rolls Series) i (1861), pl. vii. Robert Cotton himself may have removed the regnal tables from his MSS. Tiberius A VI and Otho B XI when he was compiling the genealogy of James I, which he carried back to Alfred.

[2] See p. 296 above.

[3] *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, 1865, pp. viii f. Plummer agrees in his edition ii, p. cxiii.

(iv) The Chronicle and the OE. Bede. The Old English version of Bede's *History* omits the Epitome. Plummer notes that, even where it depends on the History, the Chronicle of 892 does not agree in expression with the *OE. Bede*, as it often does with the *OE. Orosius*. He infers, unconvincingly, that Bede had not yet been translated in 892,[1] and explains that the Epitome was omitted from the *OE. Bede* because it was already available in the Chronicle.[2]

There is another indication. The pedigrees of the early kings of Kent —Hengest to Woden and Æthelberht to Hengest—are exceptionally omitted from the Chronicle of 892. The likeliest reason is that they were available in two of the most important chapters of Bede for Anglo-Saxon history,[3] one giving the Continental origins of the English invaders,[4] the other recording both the arrival of Augustine and the names of the Bretwaldas or overlords of all England. So here, as in the treatment of the Epitome, there is evidence that the two works were regarded as complementary. If the *OE. Bede* was not earlier than the Chronicle of 892, it must have been a related project carried out at the

[1] Edition ii, p. cviii; cf. the fuller discussion in his *Life and Times of Alfred the Great*, pp. 156 ff. Without touching on the large questions of Alfred's part in the compilation of the Chronicle and in the translation of Bede, it is difficult to examine this argument. Underlying it is the assumption that these two works and the *OE. Orosius*, all from the last decade of the ninth century, have the same literary and linguistic background. But on that assumption one would expect likenesses of expression between the Chronicle and the *OE. Bede*, whichever was the earlier. Their absence points to a different literary and linguistic background for the *OE. Bede*. See also p. 339 n., below.

There is another underlying assumption—that Alfred himself translated or rather adapted Orosius. The view now prevalent, which I accept provisionally, is that he encouraged, or planned, or perhaps contributed information to the Chronicle of 892, but did not himself compile it. How then is the likeness with *Orosius* to be explained? One possibility is that the compiler (or a compiler) of the Chronicle of 892 and the adapter of Orosius were the same person, whom the king commissioned to do both works. It would argue some vanity and administrative weakness in King Alfred if, having conceived a great plan of education through the vernacular, he made the provision of the books 'most necessary for all men to know' depend too much on his own health and his leisure for translating.

The attribution of the *OE. Orosius* to Alfred rests on William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum* (Rolls Series) i, p. 132. The *OE. Bede* is attributed to him by William of Malmesbury ibid.; by a Latin couplet in MS. Cambr. Univ. Lib. Kk. 3. 18; and by Ælfric *Catholic Homilies* ed. Thorpe ii, p. 118.

[2] Edition ii, p. cviii, note 6.

[3] See above, p. 288. The short pedigree of the East Anglian king Eorpwald, also in Bede, might have been given under 632, but its omission is not significant.

[4] Additions from this chapter are made in Chronicle E (which takes over Hengest's pedigree), and by a hand of *c.* 1100 in the Parker MS. The passage on the Bretwaldas is elaborated in all copies of the Chronicle.

same time. The almost negligible use of the text of Bede (as distinct from the Epitome) in the Chronicle of 892[1] is further evidence of a plan of work to avoid overlapping. So there is reason to think that the Epitome was first incorporated in the Chronicle about 892.

(v) The Shorter West Saxon Pedigrees. The non-West Saxon genealogies of the Vespasian group were drawn on up to Offa's accession, entered at 755, by which date their usefulness was exhausted. But the shorter West Saxon pedigrees in the list at p. 298 above end with 728. Under that year, at the accession of Æthelheard whose parentage is not given, the pedigree of Oswald 'the Atheling', against whom he fought, is taken back to Ceawlin. The Anglo-Saxons were often content to state bare facts where we expect them to be coloured or explained. So this pedigree, with the mention of Oswald's death in 730, seems to be the only record of a serious contest for the throne, derived from a source which supported the unsuccessful Oswald as having the hereditary right.

Of King Æscwine also nothing is known, except that the Chronicle gives his pedigree on his accession in 674, and notes that he fought against Wulfhere of Mercia in 675 and died in 676. But the pedigree is there because he belonged to a collateral line which had not produced a king for several generations. So it is with his successors: Centwine who became king in 676, Ceadwalla who 'began to fight for the kingship' in 685, and Ine whose reign began in 688. If Ceolwulf (597) and Cynegils (611) are brought in for completeness, it appears that the Chronicle gives the pedigree of each early West Saxon king on his accession, if his hereditary claim could be stated in pedigree form and he was not thought to be the son of the preceding king.

These short Wessex genealogies, found only in the Chronicle, are an integral part of its plan, and should be distinguished from the longer ones which are by comparison excrescences: the honorific genealogies of Æthelwulf (855) given at his death, and of Cerdic (552) given long after his death and the accession of Cynric; the antiquarian genealogies of Ida of Bernicia (547), Ælle of Deira (560), Penda of Mercia (696).[2]

Beyond the routine statement that their 'kin goes back to Cerdic', neither the Chronicle annals nor the Regnal Table gives pedigrees for the kings who ruled Wessex from 728, when Oswald the Atheling failed to secure the throne, till 802 when Ecgberht re-established an hereditary succession. There is no sign that any of the kings without pedigrees—Æthelheard, Cuthred, Sigebryht, Cynewulf, Beorhtric—was the natural heir to his predecessor; the alliteration of names is broken, and the violence of the times is epitomized in the famous annal at 755, which brings together the deposition and murder of Sigebryht, and the deaths of his brother Cyneheard and King Cynewulf (786) in a surprise bid for revenge and power. In such times it would be useless and might be dangerous to record royal pedigrees.

So the cessation of short pedigrees after 728 is not good evidence of a change in the authorship of the Chronicle annals soon after that year:[1] rather, it indicates a change in the conditions of kingship.

Nor is there much weight in the argument that pedigrees like those of Æscwine and Oswald the Atheling must derive from a contemporary written source because these princes were forgotten or negligible in the ninth century.[2] Kings and strong claimants to the throne are not quickly forgotten. One may still find villagers who, without a written record, can trace back their descent through a century and a half to an undistinguished great-grandfather. In Anglo-Saxon times when the conception of kindred was vital, the descendants of kings might reach back still farther in memory: thus Alfred's mother Osburh was reputed to come from Jutish stock, of the kin of Stuf and Wihtgar,[3] the sixth-century rulers of the Isle of Wight. In the ninth century, when hereditary succession was firmly re-established, a careful investigator of family traditions could have recovered the pedigrees of Oswald and Æscwine, and devised short pedigrees for much earlier kings of Wessex at least as credible as those in the Chronicle. But such an investigator, working when the quarrels of the eighth century were no longer active, would surely have had the curiosity to recover the pedigrees of some of the kings who ruled between 728 and 802. That none of them is recorded is an indication that pedigrees like those of Æscwine and Oswald the Atheling came from an eighth-century written source; and there is a presumption that the same source contained a pedigree of Ine.

(vi) Creoda.—In the early part of the Chronicle there is little sign of the patient investigation by a co-ordinating mind that distinguishes Bede's *History*. No doubt some attempt was made, in Alfred's time and earlier, to collect obvious sources of information; but they were slight and scrappy, and chance plays a great part in the record. One such chance sets the problem of Creoda, who has been mentioned incidentally above, pp. 296, 299. Creoda is unknown to the Chronicle narrative. That narrative seems to be based on a tradition in alliterative form which named a succession of fathers and sons in pairs as the builders of the pre-Christian West Saxon kingdom—Cerdic and Cynric, Cynric and Ceawlin, Ceawlin and Cutha. Because later West Saxon kings claimed descent from them, Cerdic and Cynric probably enjoyed a pre-eminence

[1] Plummer ii, p. lxi n.

[2] The pedigrees of Wihtred of Kent (694) and Offa of Mercia (755) might belong to either group. Both follow a struggle for the throne; but they give additional information about great neighbouring kings, and derive from the same source as the longer pedigrees.

[1] Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, p. 27.

[2] Wheeler *E.H.R.* xxxvi, pp. 161 f.

[3] Asser, ch. 2. For the preservation of such a tradition a detailed pedigree is not necessary.

in eighth- and ninth-century tradition greater than that they had in earlier times. But from the later ninth century onwards a rival account, which makes Creoda Cerdic's son and Cynric's father, has troubled chroniclers and historians; and this problem of conflicting traditions can now be clarified:

First, Creoda occurs only in one context, the pedigree of Ine (or his brother Ingild) to Cerdic, which is the same in CT and the West Saxon Regnal Table (R^B), and (except that they have the short form *Cutha* for *Cuthwulf*) in Asser and the archetype of the Chronicle circulated in 892. All represent one document which ran, as we have seen:[1] 'Ine Coenreding, Coenred Ceolualding, Ceoluald Cuðuulfing, Cuðuulf Cuðuining, Cuðuine Celining, Celin Cynricing, Cynric Crioding, Criodo Ceardicing'; and had it not turned up in West Saxon court circles in the second half of the ninth century, no hint of a West Saxon Creoda would have reached us.

Secondly, historians must decide whether there was a Creoda son of Cerdic, not by the evidence of alliteration, which suits both alternatives;[2] nor by proof that his name stood in the archetype of the Chronicle at the year 855, because the Chronicle has both traditions; but simply on the value they attach to this lost document as against the Chronicle narrative. Its authority should not be prejudiced by the pedigree of Cerdic (R^A) to Woden which, in shorter or longer form, is associated with it.

Thirdly, there is no ninth-century or later evidence for a living tradition of Creoda in Wessex, as distinct from this slender thread of written tradition. The West Saxon form of the name is *Crīda* (*Crȳda*); yet in the three copies of the Chronicle which contain it (B, C, D), in CT, in R^B of the Regnal Table, in Asser, and as late as the correcting hand of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* and Matthew Paris, the West Saxon form never appears—always the non-West Saxon *Creoda*. There are other examples where an obsolete form of a forgotten name is retained as a kind of fossil. *Bieda* is the early West Saxon form of Anglian *Beda*, and *Bieda* the son of Port keeps the spelling with *ie* at the year 501 in all late Chronicle manuscripts (B, C, E, F) and in William of Malmesbury, where a living tradition would give *Byda* or *Bida*. Again, Bede's *Oisc* son of Hengest should be represented in ninth-century West Saxon or Kentish by *Oesc*, later *Ēsc*; yet *Æsc* (24 instances), presumably with a short vowel, appears in all manuscripts of the Chronicle, whatever their date and place of origin, through a misreading of the unfamiliar *oesc* in a written source and mechanical copying thereafter.[3]

[1] Above, pp. 297, 299.

[2] I cannot follow this part of W. H. Stevenson's argument in his *Asser*, pp. 158 f.

[3] Æthelweard ii, ch. 2 has *Ese* (from *Oese*), and William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum* i, ch. 8 has *Eisc*, a misreading of Bede's *Oisc*; but both have *Æs* from the Chronicle in their narrative. *Oisc* in the Annals of St. Neot's is better explained by direct reference to Bede than by an old copy of the Chronicle used by the annalist, as Stevenson suggests, *Asser*, p. 105. *Æsc* for *Oesc*, *Esc* seems to be characteristic of the Chronicle tradition. The Vespasian group has *Oese*, *Oesing* by scribal confusion of *c* and *e* (cf. Nennius *Ossa*). In the rendering of *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 5 the MSS. of the *OE. Bede* have *Oesc* (so B; *Oese* C, O, and Ca), *Oescing*, *Oesces*, except Tanner 10 which has *Æsc*, &c., perhaps by influence of the Chronicle. It is noteworthy that the archetype of the *OE. Bede* had *Oesc*, and the archetype of the Chronicle had *Æsc*, although any one person applying his mind to both texts could not fail to see that they represent the same king; cf. p. 335 n. 1 above.

APPENDIX B

The Danish Royal Pedigree in *Beowulf*

The royal pedigree near the beginning of *Beowulf* is treated separately, because it professes to give the descent of a Danish, not an Anglo-Saxon, king. It has been discussed by critics of the poem with a wealth of suggested explanations; and there is room for differences of opinion. I propose to run over the scanty evidence afresh, without being drawn too far away from genealogies; and to start from what seems relatively firm ground: that in its remoter parts the pedigree of Æthelwulf in the Chronicle is a fiction of the late ninth century.[1]

In the following table, which should be read with the notes on p. 315 above, Æ is taken from Æthelweard's West Saxon genealogy; B is the Danish genealogy from *Beowulf*; D the Danish genealogy according to the tradition of Denmark recorded by Sven Aageson *c.* 1190.

Æ	B	D
Scef	Scef	——
Scyld	Scyld	Scyld
Beo	Beowulf	Frotho
Tetuua, &c.	Healfdene, &c.	Healfdene, &c.

With Tetuua in Æ and Healfdene in B and D the lists separate and take on a national character; but the likeness of the English documents Æ and B in the first three names cannot be mere coincidence, and since both lists are fictitious, it is to be explained by borrowing or conflation.

That *Beowulf* here has the greater authority of a record from the seventh or eighth century should not be taken for granted. Whether the text recorded *circa* 1000 was all put into verse by one author, or is the product of two or more who worked at different times, is a matter of opinion: there is no old tradition or fair presumption which gives a preference to one view unless the other can be established. But those who have regarded *Beowulf* as to some extent composite are agreed that the Introduction contains comparatively late work; and they include such accomplished critics as Müllenhoff, Ten Brink, Bradley, who noted that it stands outside the numbering of sections, and Schücking, who

[1] See above, pp. 321 f.

assembled differences of syntactical usage.[1] This has a bearing on two famous difficulties in the genealogy it presents.

First, it twice names as Scyld's son a Beowulf, not mentioned elsewhere, who is brought into no relation with the hero of the poem. 'Beowulf' is a rare name: outside the poem it occurs once in English pre-Conquest documents, once (*Bjólfr*) in Icelandic; and it is not in the tradition of Denmark. So the odds are long against a legendary Danish Beowulf appearing at the commencement of a poem about Beowulf the Geat.[2] And if two legendary Beowulfs happened to come into the same narrative, one would expect some reference to the strange coincidence—that Hrothgar, for instance, when he greets the visiting hero, would mention that his own grandfather bore the same name. The other English documents—Asser, the Chronicle of 892, Æthelweard—support the sequence Sceaf–Scyld–Beo. If the English poem is brought into line by reading *Beo* for *Beowulf* in lines 18 and 53, the difficulty is removed; no further consequential change is needed for metrical or other reasons; and a possible explanation of the confusion is provided. A reader or copyist, beginning the adventures of Beowulf the Geat, might hastily assume that *Beo* in the Introduction stood for the name of the hero. Such a superficial error could be made at any stage up to the surviving copy, and if it was made late, no adjustment in the rest of the narrative need be expected. The proposal to read *Beo* is old and well known. Few conjectures have so strong a claim to be received into the text. Its acceptance leaves unprejudiced two interrelated questions which lie outside the present scope: whether Beo and Beowulf the Geat are ultimately connected, and whether Frotho's dragon-fight is the same as that described in *Beowulf*.[3]

The second difficulty is in the expression *Scyld Scefing* which normally means 'Scyld, son of Sceaf'. Scyld in the Danish genealogy is reasonably accounted for as an eponymous king whose name has been deduced from *Scyldingas*, i.e. 'people of (or with) the shield', so that he ought not to have a known father. Again, the story of Scyld referred to in *Beowulf*—that he arrived as an unknown child, alone in a boat laden with treasures—is of a type used elsewhere to account for a hero whose origin is unknown. Æthelweard tells the story of Sceaf, and the two accounts cannot be reconciled. It has been suggested that *Scyld Scefing* in *Beowulf* means

[1] H. Bradley in *Encyc. Brit.* (1910) s.v. *Beowulf*; see his *Collected Papers*, 1928, p. 207; L. Schücking *Beowulfs Rückkehr*, Halle 1905, pp. 53, 72.

[2] R. C. Boer *Beowulf*, Halle 1912, pp. 110 ff. argues that the Danish king Beowulf was originally the hero of the dragon-fight in *Beowulf*, and that this part of the Introduction was once attached to the dragon-fight. But the objection to two Beowulfs holds, and is not weakened by Boer's elaborate construction at pp. 142 ff. of the same book. It is not as if *Beowulf* meant etymologically anything like 'monster-killer'.

[3] E. Sievers *Berichten der Kgl. Sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* (1895), pp. 181 ff. noted that Frotho, who occupies the place of Beo(wulf) in the genealogy from Denmark, was the hero of a dragon-fight.

'Scyld of the Sheaf'. The purpose of this unusual interpretation is to make *Beowulf* consistent, but the objections outweigh that advantage. (i) Æthelweard, the reviser of the Regnal Table in Edgar's reign,[1] and fairly certainly Asser and the Chronicle of 892, take *Sceafing* to mean 'son of Sceaf'. If the rare meaning 'of the sheaf' were possible, they might be wrong, though such an error would imply that they did not know a story of Scyld and the sheaf. (ii) Names of tribes like *Scyldingas*, *Helmingas* 'people of the shield', 'helm', are not really parallel to *Scyld Scefing* in the sense 'Scyld who on a particular occasion was associated with a sheaf'. (iii) There is no hint of the sheaf story in any pre-Conquest authority. It may well be an etymological fancy of William of Malmesbury,[2] and he tells the story of Sceaf, not of Scyld. Then, on a balance of probabilities, *Scyld Scefing* in *Beowulf* means 'Scyld, son of Sceaf'; and Sceaf and Beo, unknown in Scandinavian tradition, have been adopted from English sources into the Danish genealogy given in the English poem. On this view the story of Scyld's mysterious arrival, which is not in the tradition of Denmark, is likely to be borrowed from the English legend of Sceaf. It must be borrowed from somewhere if, as the leading authorities agree, the Danish ruler Scyld has been deduced from the people-name *Scyldingas*.

There is good evidence for an eponymous Danish Scyld. Was there also another Scyld, whose existence in native English tradition provided a false link between the English and Danish genealogies? The occurrence of Sceaf–Scyld(Sceldwea)–Beaw in the fantastic part of Æthelwulf's pedigree is not clear evidence. By 892–3, when these names first appear, the Danes had been raiding in England for a century and had made extensive settlements in the rich and populous eastern counties. Not much is known about them before the late tenth century, but as intermediaries between English and Scandinavians, as an audience for the oral literature of both peoples, and as possible preservers of heathen legends that had lost their hold in the long-christianized South, the inhabitants of the Danelaw cannot be neglected. It is noteworthy that Æthelweard, whose province is generally agreed to be the English South-West, gives the Scandinavian form *Uuithar* for Woden's son in the genealogy of Hengest, not Bede's *Uecta*, or *Uegdæg* of the Vespasian group.

A related question should be taken first: Does *Sceldwea* (for that is the archetypal form proved by the agreement of Asser, the Parker MS., and *Sceldweaing* in Chronicle B) represent the same name as *Scyld*? Æthelweard, a good authority on this point, thought that it did, and I prefer to follow him. With no satisfactory explanation of the ending *-wea*[3] a

[1] See above, p. 290 n. 2.

[2] See above, pp. 319 f.

[3] If the tradition of Scyld was borrowed from or revived by the Danish invaders and settlers, it is just possible that *w* in *Sceldwea* may reflect the old ending of the nominative in the *n*- stem, which seems to have survived as late as the ninth century in Norse usage. But in these rigmaroles a jingling

doubt must remain; but those who take *Sceldwea* and *Scyld* to be distinct names whose likeness caused confusion between the English and Danish genealogies, cannot fairly use the following Abingdon story as evidence for a native English Scyld. It is not reasonable to postulate an English Sceldwea, an English Scyld and a Danish Scyld, all different, in order to explain the recorded genealogies.

The Abingdon story was first adduced by Kemble, and has been accepted as witness to an ancient tradition by such good authorities as Chadwick and Olrik.[1] It appears in the thirteenth-century chronicle of Abingdon,[2] and may be summarized:

> In the reign of King Edmund (939–46) a dispute arose between Oxford claimants and the monks of Abingdon about a meadow called Beri,[3] lying between the Thames and Gifteleia (Iffley). After prayer and fasting, the monks were divinely inspired with a plan for settling the rightful ownership. Rising at dawn on an appointed day, they took a round shield, placed upon it a sheaf of corn, and above that a wax candle of suitable size. They lighted the candle, floated the shield with its freight in the Thames near their church, and a few of them followed it in a boat. It moved from side to side of the river, pointing out the monastery's lands as with a finger. When it came to Beri, which is an island in winter and often in summer, the candle left mid-stream and passed right round the island-meadow, thus proving it to be the property of the monks of Abingdon.

The credibility of this story is easily shaken. It is recorded late in a chronicle which is full of inventions. It is not in the twelfth-century Abingdon chronicle Claudius C IX.[4] It comes from a monastery noted for falsifications, and its motive is the establishment of Abingdon's claim to disputed land by a kind of judgement of God given at a time beyond the reach of memory. Edmund's reign may have been chosen because Abingdon had so little authentic history until Edmund's successor Eadred, by his grant to Bishop Æthelwold, transformed it from a small, neglected monastery into one of the most influential in England.[5] That the experiment described was ever made is impossible, except by

tendency may corrupt the endings: cf. *Aloc*, *Benoc* in the Chronicle pedigree of Ida, or *Sceldius–Beowius–Tetius–Getius* in William of Malmesbury.

[1] H. M. Chadwick *Origin of the English Nation*, pp. 278 ff.; A. Olrik *The Heroic Legends of Denmark* transl. L. M. Hollander, New York 1919, ch. viii.

[2] Ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, 1858, i, p. 89.

[3] *Berig* occurs again at p. 126 of the same volume in the Anglo-Saxon boundaries of 20 hides said to have been given to Abingdon by King Ine. See Birch *Cartularium Saxonicum* Nos. 906 and 971. Mr. G. B. Grundy identified Berig as 'the great eyot which extends from the Gut to the railway bridge over the Thames at Kennington'; and Mrs. Gelling, who is preparing the Berkshire material for the English Place-Name Society, regards this identification as reasonable.

[4] See F. M. Stenton *The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon*, 1913, pp. 2 ff. for the relations of the texts.

[5] Stenton op. cit. esp. pp. 7 ff.

a miracle (which is no doubt intended); for the shield and its freight moved along the Thames against the main stream, which runs from Oxford to Abingdon. Still, it may be argued that the association of a shield and a sheaf is beyond the inventive power of the Abingdon monks, that it was suggested by some ancient ritual, and so points to an old connexion between the shadowy Sceaf and Scyld. I doubt whether we can set such limits to invention in the most fertile age of romance. So far from suggesting an old ritual, the chronicler claims that it was a divinely inspired plan for a very exceptional occasion; and it cannot be assumed that disputes about eyots were frequent enough to preserve the memory of an ancient rite for settling them. The germ of the story is the observation that in a backwater of a slow river, like the Thames near Oxford and Abingdon, the current sometimes runs in a direction opposite to that of the river that feeds it. Under favourable conditions an object floating down the river might pass round an eyot bounded by the main stream and a backwater.

Then again, the candle, lighted in the daytime and in the open air, is as prominent as the sheaf, more prominent than the shield. It has all the appearance of a Christian symbol of divine guidance and illumination, and is easier to explain as the fancy of a monkish chronicler than as a survival from primitive ritual practice. By the same symbolism, a sheaf, which is light and conspicuous, could represent the produce of the disputed land. The 'raft' should be something dignified and free from the suspicion of contrivance. A shield might suggest defence of the right; but apart from that, could anything more suitable be imagined than the round shield, buoyant, saucer-shaped, floating without bias towards any direction, and convenient for displaying the candle and sheaf to the onlookers? It may be granted that there is not much evidence for the practical use of the round shield after the Conquest, but even if no specimens were preserved in old stores of arms, the round shield could be seen in carvings, tapestries, and the illustrations of books. Anybody who has dealt with the falsifications of charters will not underestimate the antiquarian interests of the Abingdon monks, or their ingenuity in supporting claims to land. Only by giving it the benefit of every doubt can this late story be converted into evidence that the early Anglo-Saxons knew of two closely associated personages or spirits, an English Sceaf and an English Scyld.

Another consideration bears on the identity of Scyld. The only indication that Heremod was connected with the English is in the fantastic pedigree of Æthelwulf, a Saxon not an Anglian king, and in the part of it which his descendant Æthelweard omits. As evidence it is worthless. But in *Beowulf* 901 ff., 1709 ff. it is implied that Heremod ruled the Danes before Scyld, and late Scandinavian tradition also suggests that he was a ruler of the Danes.[1] If then a Danish Heremod is

[1] See the brief summary by A. Heusler in J. Hoops *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* (1915) s.v. *Heremod*.

borrowed into Æthelwulf's pedigree in the Chronicle, Scyld (Sceldwea) who appears as his son in the same pedigree was probably understood to be the Danish Scyld, ruler of the Scyldings.

To suppose that there was only one legendary ruler called Scyld has the advantage of simplicity, for the name is rare. Curiously enough, when a rare legendary name appears in Anglo-Saxon in more than one context, some critics of standing assume that there were two namesakes: two Beowulfs, two Germanic Finns, two Hengests. A strange coincidence is always possible, though one of this kind would be so confusing in legend that we should hardly expect it to survive. But a monotonous repetition of the same coincidence is improbable. The old rule against multiplying entities beyond what is necessary favours one Scyld, and perhaps should tilt the balance in favour of one Sceaf(a), the same that *Widsith* makes the legendary ruler of the Lombards.[1]

It should be plain that this discussion of the pedigree in *Beowulf* has led to little more than an expression of opinion, or rather of a number of interrelated opinions. From the nature of the evidence, one cannot make each step secure: nor, after several choices between alternative possibilities, is there the satisfaction of showing that the result fits neatly into another group of established facts. It is, and is likely to remain, a problem with too many unknowns.

Still it may be worth while to complete the interpretation by suggesting a way in which Sceaf, Scyld, Beo might appear in that order in three Anglo-Saxon documents. In the earliest recorded, the pedigree of Æthelwulf from the Chronicle of 892, the stem-vowels of *Sceld-*, *Beaw* are non-West Saxon (*Sceaf* is general Old English). So it may be inferred that, at that time, the names did not belong to West Saxon tradition, but were imported into Æthelwulf's pedigree from a non-West Saxon source; and, on the analogy of forms like *Creoda*,[2] from a written, not from an oral source. Again, all three names are distinguished by having simple meanings 'sheaf', 'shield', 'barley', which suggests myth and remoteness in time. And they have yet another feature in common. *Sceaf* is connected with *Scani* by Æthelweard; the names alliterate; and if Sceafa of the Lombards in *Widsith* is the same, the Lombards had a strong tradition that they came from *Scadanau*.[3] Scyld, if he is the eponym of the Scyldings (Danes), had the same kingdom, *Scedenig* in *Beowulf* 1686, and his name also alliterates. According to *Beowulf* 19, Scyld's son Beo[wulf] ruled *Scedelandum in*. All the placenames[4] stand for the southern part of Scandinavia, which later gave its name to the whole peninsula.

[1] See above, p. 313 n. 4. [2] Above, p. 338.

[3] Cf. *Origo Gentis Langobardorum* in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Rerum Langobardicarum*, &c. (1878), p. 2; Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*, same volume, i, ch. 1.

[4] For the etymological relations of this group of names, see E. Björkman *Studien über die Eigennamen im* Beowulf, Halle 1920, pp. 99 f.

There is plenty of early evidence for genealogical speculation and systematization. Tacitus's notice (*Germania*, ch. ii) of the god Tuisto, with a son Mannus and three grandsons from whom the German tribes derived, was developed by the sixth century to account for the derivation of the peoples of Europe from Alanus, a descendant of Japhet.[1] We have seen how gods and heroes were arranged in neat lines of descent in the remoter parts of Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies. *Widsith* is evidence of a learned and antiquarian interest in collecting and arranging the rulers and tribes of Germanic legend. Then it seems likely enough that the question would be asked: Who was the first ruler in *Scedenig*, the traditional homeland of so many Germanic tribes? Was it Sceaf, or Scyld as the Danes claim, or Beo who, according to others, belongs to the earliest times? And somebody whose knowledge of legend was reckoned authoritative, might have settled on the order Sceaf, Scyld, Beo, assuming a natural succession of grandfather, father, and son.

For the man who introduced these names into Æthelwulf's pedigree this would be a scrap of antiquarian learning, to be copied exactly. By Æthelweard's time—the last quarter of the tenth century—it had become traditional in the royal genealogy of Wessex. In the Introduction to *Beowulf*, which may or may not be derived independently, the story of Sceaf's arrival from the sea was transferred to Scyld, the founder of Hrothgar's kingdom, and Beo was confused by a scribe or reader with Beowulf the Geat, the hero of the poem. These developments would be possible if the order Sceaf, Scyld, Beo was established as late as the ninth century, when the Danes had overrun much of non-West Saxon England; though an earlier date is not excluded if any evidence requires it.

POSTSCRIPT

How much did the Anglo-Saxons know about their early history in England, and about persons associated in legend with still earlier Germanic times? When a name appears incidentally in a sixth-century annal of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or in *Beowulf*, did it unlock a store of well-ordered information in the mind of an intelligent Anglo-Saxon? Or did it often convey no more than the vague impression of remote times that adds to the enjoyment of old stories? Evidence bearing on such questions is hard to find. Modern scholars, whether expressly or by implication, seem to prefer the first and more congenial opinion. Yet scattered through this examination of the Anglo-Saxon genealogies there is a considerable amount of evidence in the other direction. As examples: we should expect agreement on the names of Hengest's

[1] A further development is in Nennius *Historia Brittonum*, ch. xvii.

son and grandson because the kings of Kent claimed descent from them and Bede records them; yet of the five witnesses (up to and including Æthelweard) who might be reckoned intelligent, no two agree both in the names and their order (pp. 324 f. and 338 f.). The variant forms of Æthelwulf's pedigree (pp. 301 ff.) could not have arisen or survived if consistent legends about the heroes or gods in its remoter parts had been well known in the ninth century. Sometimes the stereotyped spelling of names tells against a living tradition (p. 338). And there are instances of surprising carelessness (pp. 316 and 325).

This evidence covers a long period. It begins in the early eighth century, and in the ninth century, when comparisons become possible, the number of variants or errors is already large. It might be objected that all the genealogies have come down to us through clerical channels which were indifferent or hostile to secular legend. But Æthelweard was a layman; the compiler of the Chronicle of 892 should have been more than usually well versed in tradition; on the most sceptical view of King Alfred's share in that Chronicle he is likely to have read it attentively; and a well-informed audience might be expected to restrain fanciful or erroneous variations. In any case, if *Beowulf*, as is now commonly supposed, was a written composition, or was recorded in writing in the eighth century, it too must have come down to us through similar channels until the extant copy was made as late as Æthelweard's time.

To put the issue more clearly: there is good evidence that old stories were told throughout Anglo-Saxon times, and that some stories about persons of the Heroic Age outlived the Norman Conquest. But there is little if any evidence to show whether the same stories were always attached to the same names, or whether, if all the stories could be assembled, an historian or a mythographer would be likely to find them consistent. So it is reasonable to give full weight to the evidence from the genealogies, and in any work of interpretation, to allow room for inconsistency, vagueness, and error in Anglo-Saxon tradition.

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